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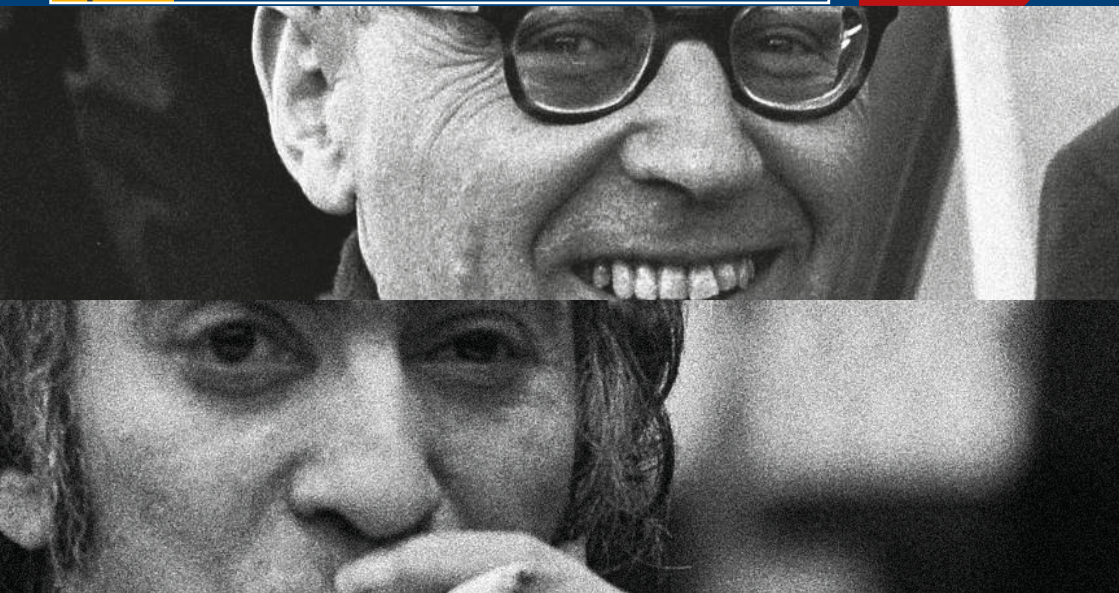
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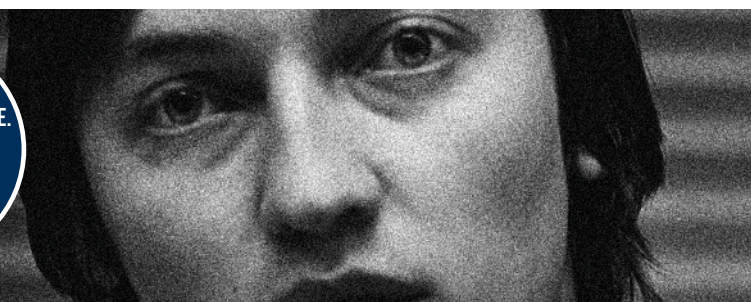
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Contents



29 | INTERVIEW: GM BORISLAV IVKOV

5 The 9th London Chess Classic **AN AMERICAN TRIUMPH IN LONDON**

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

22 London Classic British Knockout **LUKE MCSHANE'S DESERVED VICTORY**

By IM Shaun Taulbut

34 The Russian Superfinal **SVIDLER'S EIGHTH RUSSIAN TITLE**

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

40 Chess & Art **DRAWING HUMOUR FROM THE CHESSBOARD**

By Milan Dinic

43 The King Salman World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships **MONEY, CONTROVERSY AND GOOD CHESS**

By IM Shaun Taulbut

49 Openings for Amateurs **C.H.O'D. ALEXANDER VERSUS THE OLD SCHEVENINGEN**

By Pete Tamburro

BIG REPORT


 The logo for the London Chess Classic, featuring the words "LONDON CHESS" in large, bold, white capital letters on a red background, with "CLASSIC" in smaller white capital letters on a black background below it.

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 The logo for the Grand Chess Tour United Kingdom, featuring the text "GRAND CHESS TOUR" in bold black capital letters with a chess knight icon, and "UNITED KINGDOM" in smaller black capital letters below it. In the background, there is a silhouette of the London skyline including Big Ben, the London Eye, and the Tower Bridge.

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THE 9TH LONDON CHESS CLASSIC AN AMERICAN TRIUMPH **IN LONDON** **AND ADAMS' EARLY** **CHRISTMAS GIFTS**

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Grand Chess Tour (Lennart Ootes / Spectrum Studios)

This year's London Chess Classic (1-11 December) was the last tournament of the Grand Chess Tour. Only two players still had a chance to win the Tour - Carlsen and Vachier-Lagrave. It was expected that these two would be fighting for the top honours, but the tournament went in a completely different direction.

The London Chess Classic 2017 was a peculiar tournament. The first four rounds saw only one decisive game and this led to the usual lamentations of 'the end of chess' and the 'hopeless and boring' classical time control. I have never understood such

outcries, especially as they immediately cease the moment a few decisive games are played. The result of a draw is never a problem if the players are fighting until the end and giving their best. The public thrives when seeing a winner and a loser, but more often it is the fight that gives us the greatest pleasure.

The first player to break the deadlock was Fabiano Caruana. In Round 4 his newly-adopted Taimanov Sicilian brought him a very good position immediately after the opening against Karjakin, who this time wasn't well prepared.

CARUANA FIRST TO BREAK THE 3-ROUND DRAW DEADLOCK

Sergey Karjakin – Fabiano Caruana

9th London Classic 2017, London

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♝c7 A rare choice in Caruana's repertoire (later on when needing a draw he would choose the Petroff Defence against Vachier-Lagrave). He barely drew with the Taimanov against Kramnik in Dortmund in 2016 and has lately played the Kan Variation with 4...a6. This must have been a surprise for Karjakin and here he uncharacteristically made a practical oversight: he went for the most principled and topical lines without remembering his preparation. As a result of this he was worse after only 15 moves!

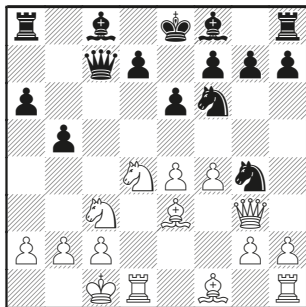
6.♗e3 a6 7.♝f3 The most topical way to counter the Taimanov.

7...♗e5 Introduced into modern practice by Giri against Karjakin in 2014.

8.♝g3 b5 This is more precise as it cuts down White's options.

8...h5 was Giri's preferred move-order, but this allows White various other options like 9.♗f5!?, 9.♗f4!?, 9.h4!?, while the stem game continued 9.f3 b5 10.0-0 1-0 (42) Karjakin,S (2767)-Giri,A (2768) Tashkent 2014).

9.0-0-0 ♖f6 10.f4 ♗eg4



11.♗g1 11.e5?! is an alternative, recently tried in a blitz game, but it is not very good for White: 11...♗xe3 12.♝xe3 b4! 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♝xe4 ♗b7 15.♝d3 ♗c5 and Black is already better, with the bishop pair and a free-flowing game. White lasted only 3 moves longer: 16.♗b1 ♗c8 17.♗b3? ♗e3! ♗f4 18.♗a5 ♗d5 0-1 (18) Vachier Lagrave,M (2795)-Grischuk,A (2750) chess.com INT 2017.

11...h5 11...b4 12.♗a4 h5 allows White to defend the e4 pawn by 13.♗d3!

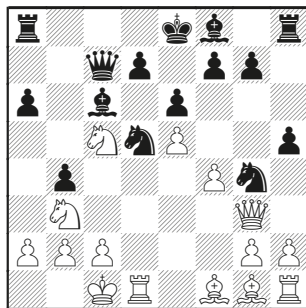
12.e5 12.♗d3 can now be met by 12...♗b7, keeping the option of ...b4 for an appropriate moment.

12...b4 13.♗a4 13.♗b1 is possible 13...♗e4 14.♝e1 ♗b7 15.♗d2 ♗xd2 16.♗xd2 g6 with chances for both sides: 0-1 (40) Oparin,G (2605)-Najer,E (2706) Sochi 2017.

13...♗d5 14.♗b3?! This follows a blitz game by Nepomniachtchi, but it is the last moment to look for improvements as from now on the game starts to unravel in Black's favour.

14.h3 is probably better, as after 14...♗h6 15.♗d3 ♗b7 the position is unclear.

14...♗b7 15.♗ac5 ♗c6

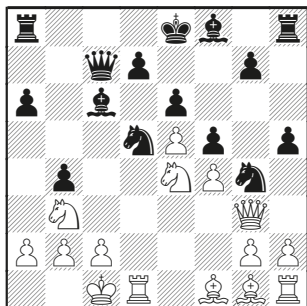


This natural improvement gives Black a better game.

15...♖c8? was bad as the rook was actually better placed on a8. 16.♗d3 ½-½ (109) Nepomniachtchi,I (2714)-Wang,Y (2720) Beijing 2014.

16.♗e4 16.♗xa6?! just opens the file for the rook on a8: 16...♖c8 17.♗ac5 ♖xa2.

16...f5!



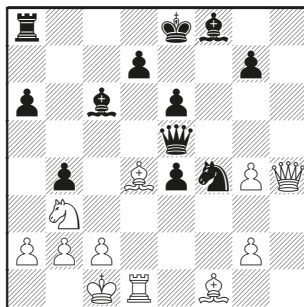
A typical central thrust in the Taimanov. White now is faced with a difficult choice: to allow Black a strong centre in an endgame, or to keep the queens on and try to muddy the waters.

17.h3 Karjakin chooses to muddy the waters.

17.exf6 was the alternative, but after 17...gxf6 White has problems defending

the f4-pawn: 18.h3 ♖xf4+ 19.♖xf4 ♗xf4 20.♗bc5 ♗xc5 21.♗xc5 ♗e5 22.♗xa6 b3! 23.axb3 ♖f7 with a better endgame for Black, who will take on g2 on his next move.

17...h4! 18.♖e1 fxe4 19.hxg4 ♗xf4 20.♗xh4 ♗xh4 21.♖xh4 ♖xe5 22.♗d4



This is what Karjakin must have counted on, as the queen has no good square to retreat to, but after Black's strong next move his advantage is undisputable.

22...♗g6! 22...♖c7? 23.g3 ♗d5 24.♖h5+ wins for White.

23.♖h3 ♖g5+ 24.♖b1 ♗d5 Black has a stable advantage here. He's a pawn up and White's kingside structure is a sorry sight. Additionally, White's pieces are uncoordinated. But there are still many pieces on the board and Black's king is still in the centre, so Black needs to be careful.

25.♗g1 Liberating d4 for the ♗b3.

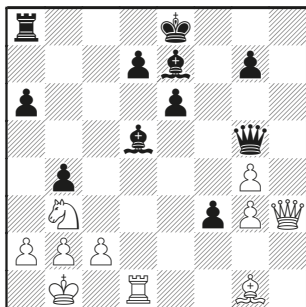
25...♗e7 26.g3?! 26.♗d4 following the plan was better: 26...♖f7 ♗h8 27.♖g3 ♖e5 28.♖e1 ♖g8 and Black is much better, but for now White doesn't lose by force.

26...♗e5! Immediately attacking g4.

27.♗e2 ♗f3 28.♗xf3 exf3

Fabiano Caruana with his newly-adopted Taimanov Sicilian surprised Karjakin in Round 4





In addition to the bishop pair Black now has a passed pawn on f3. His position is winning.

29.♙d4 ♖f7 30.♘c1 d6 Slowly setting in motion the central pawn mass.

31.♘d3 e5 32.♙f2 ♙e6 33.♘xb4 e4 The pawn on g4 can be taken at any moment.

34.♙h1 ♜c8 35.♘xa6 ♙a5! The knight has no exit so White is forced to exchange queens, after which the black pawns easily decide the issue.

36.♙h5+ ♙xh5 37.gxh5 ♙g5 38.♜e1 ♙c4 39.♘b4 ♜e8 40.♜e3 40.♙e3 ♙xe3 41.♜xe3 f2.

40...♙xe3 41.♙xe3 ♜e5 42.g4 ♜g5!

0-1

A smooth victory for Caruana and a bleak game for Karjakin, who didn't even show his usual resilience. This game set the tone for both players - Caruana marched towards the top while Karjakin languished at the bottom during the whole tournament. Caruana was the only player to win in the next round, too. He beat Anand after the latter lost the plot in a favourable, but complex, middlegame.

THE FIRST FOUR ROUNDS SAW ONLY ONE DECISIVE GAME: CARUANA BEAT KARJAKIN... THE PUBLIC THRIVES WHEN SEEING A WINNER AND A LOSER, BUT MORE OFTEN IT IS THE FIGHT THAT GIVES US THE GREATEST PLEASURE

NEPOMNIACHTCHI'S RISE FROM ROUND 6

Then the tournament had an unexpected twist. After Caruana's victories in Rounds 4 and 5, another player took over 'the initiative' and even surpassed Caruana's

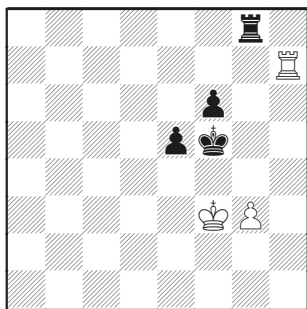
two wins in a row. Starting from Round 6 it was the mercurial Nepomniachtchi who started winning. He was hugely aided by the local player.

Packed venue at the Kensington Olympia conference centre



Michael Adams - Ian Nepomniachtchi

9th London Classic 2017, London



Adams blundered before the first time control and ended up in a rook endgame 3 vs 4 on the kingside. After further simplifications it came down to 1 vs 2 and Adams was confidently defending it for quite some time. Now we arrive at the moment when he could have more or less fixed the draw.

68...♖a8 69.♗h5+ 69.g4+! is the simplest, not allowing the Black pawns to move forward. *69...♗g6 70.♗h5 (70.♗h1 is also possible 70...♗a3+ 71.♗g2 ♗g5 72.♗f1 ♗a4 73.♗f5+ ♗g6 74.♗g3) 70...♗a4 71.♗g3 ♗f7:* Black cannot do anything on the kingside, but even sending the king to the centre doesn't achieve much. *72.♗h7+ ♗e6 73.♗h6,* latching onto the pawn on f6 and limiting the king's freedom.

69...♗g6 70.♗h4?! This still doesn't lose, but things are becoming harder for White with every missed chance.

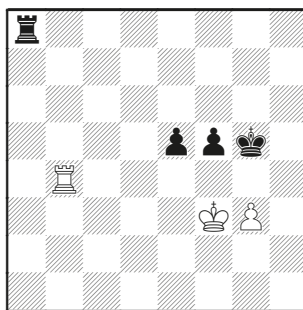
70.g4! would transpose to the previous note.

70...f5 71.♗b4? This is the losing move. The shorter move, *71.♗c4*, draws. The waiting moves with the king also shouldn't have lost.

71.♗c4!! The exclamation marks are for the precision. *71...♗g5 72.♗g2 ♗a2+ 73.♗h3*

♗f6 74.♗b4!! This is the point. Now White is one line further from the black king and the rook cannot be attacked by the black king from d5. (For comparison, see the analogous line in the comments to White's 72nd move.) *74...♗e6 75.♗h4 e4 (75...♗g2 76.♗a4 e4 77.♗h3 ♗e2 78.♗b4 and Black cannot make progress.) 76.g4!=* Now there is no attack from d5, defending the pawn on e4 and allowing for *...f4. 76...♗g2 77.♗b6+*, and again the crucial difference is that the rook is far enough away to give this check and then another and take on f5; *71.♗g2 ♗a2+ 72.♗h3 ♗f6 73.♗b4!* transposes to the line *71.♗c4* after White's 74th move; *71.♗e3!* was probably the simplest way of drawing, without the need to understand the subtleties of the rook position on the 4th rank. *71...e4 (71...♗a3+ 72.♗f2 ♗a2+ 73.♗e3 ♗e4 74.♗h8; 71...♗g5 72.♗h7) 72.♗f2 ♗a3 73.♗h8 ♗a2+ 74.♗g1 ♗f6 75.♗e8* with a fairly simple draw, not allowing the king to become active.

71...♗g5



Now White is lost.

72.♗b7 72.♗g2 ♗a2+ 73.♗h3 (73.♗g1? e4) 73...♗f6! Black's main idea to win is to push the e-pawn to e2 and then support it with the king.

A) 74.♗c4 ♗e6 75.♗h4 (75.♗b4 ♗d5 and White is in zugzwang. 76.♗h4 e4 77.♗g5 ♗c5! 78.♗b8 ♗f2 and with the support of the king the e-pawn will promote.) 75...e4 76.♗g5 (76.g4 ♗d5!) 76...♗f2 77.♗a4 e3



Michael Adams: 'I gave away too many early Christmas presents!'

The ♖f2 is ideal - it defends both f5 and e2, allowing the black king to march freely up the e-file to support the passed pawn;

B) 74.♖b6+: cutting off the king doesn't help either. 74...♗e7 75.♗h6 (75.♗h4 e4 76.♗g5 ♖f2) 75...e4 76.♖b6 ♗d7 77.♖f6 (77.♖b8 e3 78.♖b3 ♖e2 and the Black king will approach the e-pawn.) 77...♖f2 78.♖a6 e3 79.♖a3 e2 80.♖e3 ♗d6.

72...e4+ 73.♗e3 ♖a3+ 74.♗f2 ♖a2+ 75.♗e3 ♗g4, with a simple win as the black king now forces its way into White's camp.

76.♖g7+ ♗h3 77.♖g5 ♖a3+ 78.♗f2 ♖f3+ 79.♗e1 ♗g2 80.♗e2 ♖f2+ 81.♗e3 ♗f1 82.g4 ♖f3+ 83.♗d4 e3 84.♖xf5 ♖xf5 85.♗xe3 ♖f8

0-1

Like the game Karjakin-Caruaana from Round 4, this was another game that defined the tournament fate of both players. The Russian went on to win his next two games, while the Englishman lost to Carlsen in the next round (from a position where he was winning after Carlsen blundered) and also to Caruaana in the last, after declining a repetition of moves. As Adams himself put it, 'I gave away too many early Christmas presents!'

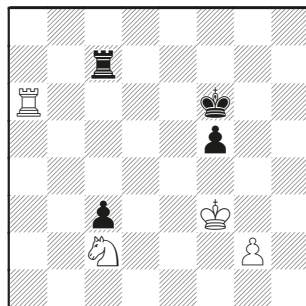
THE (UN)LUCKY MAGNUS CARLSEN

The World Champion came to the tournament fresh from his triumph in the Isle of Man and the destruction of Ding Liren, Grischuk and So in rapid and blitz matches on the internet, but he didn't play well. He drew his first 6 games, but was lucky to do so.

What he saved against Nakamura, an endgame where he was a piece down, is hard to believe.

Hikaru Nakamura – Magnus Carlsen

9th London Classic 2017, London



White is a piece up with what looks like an elementary win.

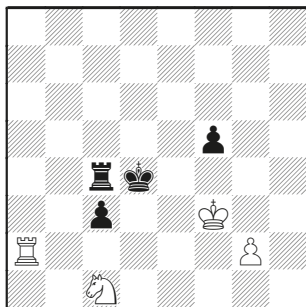
50...♗g5 51.♗d4 Practically any move that doesn't blunder something wins. But I have the impression that Nakamura was too relaxed here, knowing that anything wins, so he didn't force himself to find one clear way and played aimlessly until he spoiled it.

The simplest win for me was the following: the basic idea is to round up the pawn on c3. The knight goes to e3, the rook to c2 and then the knight attacks the pawn from d1. 51.♖a2 ♗f6 52.♗e3 ♗e5 53.♖c2 f4 54.♗d1 ♗d4 55.♖xc3 with an easy win.

51...♖c4 52.♗e6+ ♗f6 53.♗f4+ ♗e5 54.♗d3+ ♗d5 55.♖a2 55.♖a5+! was more precise, but White needed to see

the following nice line 55...♔d4 56.♘c1 c2 (56...♖b4 57.♘e2+ ♔c4 58.♖a3 c2 59.♖c3+ wins the pawn) 57.♘e2+ ♔d3 58.♘d5+ ♔d4 59.♖xd4#

55...♔d4 56.♘c1?!



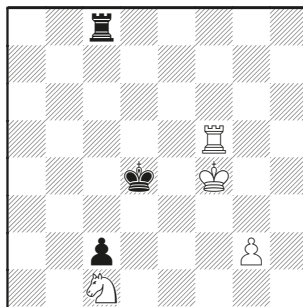
This complicates things, but with every move White is complicating things for himself. This is what happens when you don't play the most precise move - with every next one the task at hand is more complicated and difficult.

56.♘e1 was probably simpler, keeping a solid blockade on c2 and then pushing Black backwards. 56...♖c7 57.♖a4+ ♔d5 58.♘c2 ♖c8 59.♔f4.

56...c2 57.♖a5 Now White's plan is no longer to take the c-pawn, but rather to

sacrifice the knight for it, win the f5-pawn, and win the ensuing rook endgame. Needless to say taking the pawn early on was much simpler!

57...♖c3+ 58.♔f4 ♖c8 59.♖xf5??



After this Carlsen manages to draw. But things weren't easy any more.

59.♖a3! was the only move to win: 59...♖c7 60.♖e3! ♖c8 (the rook cannot leave the c-file because of 60...♖f7 61.♘e2+ ♔d5 62.♖c3 and White wins the c2-pawn) 61.g3 Now everything is defended, so with his next move White pushes the black king backwards and takes the f5-pawn. 61...♖c7 62.♘e2+ ♔d5 63.♔xf5 c1♖ 64.♘xc1 ♖xc1 65.g4, with an elementary win.

59...♖e8!= White now cannot sacrifice the knight for the pawn because Black will keep attacking it with the rook.

60.♖f7 ♖e1 61.♖d7+ 61.♘b3+ ♔c3 62.♖b7 ♖b1.

61...♔c3 62.♖c7+ ♔d2 63.♘b3+ ♔d3 64.♘c5+ ♔d4 65.♘b3+, repeating moves. I could only imagine how Nakamura must have felt after missing a win from such a position...

65...♔d3 66.♘c5+ ♔d4 67.♘b3+ ♔d3 68.g4 ♖f1+ 69.♔g5 ♖b1 70.♘c5+ ♔e3 71.♘b3 ♔d3 72.♘c5+ ♔e3 73.♘b3

½-½

Midway into the tournament, Carlsen suffered from a heavy cold



CARLSEN'S DISASTER AGAINST NEPO

After the miracle against Nakamura, Carlsen - who by that time had contracted a severe cold - opened with 1.f4 against Adams, was lost by move 13, but somehow survived and even won the game.

It was obvious, however, that his play was far from his desired level. Disaster struck in the next round when he was playing Nepomniachtchi. Carlsen was trailing by half a point and he saw this as a chance to win the tournament.

Magnus Carlsen - Ian Nepomniachtchi

9th London Classic 2017, London

1.♖f3 c5 2.c3 It may seem like a *lapsus manus*, the pawn being on his way to c4, but this is not the first time Carlsen has played this.

2...d5 2...♗f6 3.d4 e6 4.♗g5 d5 5.e3 was played at the Isle of Man open in a game Carlsen won, 1-0 (33) Carlsen,M (2827)-Xiong,J (2633) Douglas 2017.

3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 And now we have a transposition to an Exchange Slav with White's knight already on f3, something that is considered less precise for White if he wants to play the Exchange Slav.

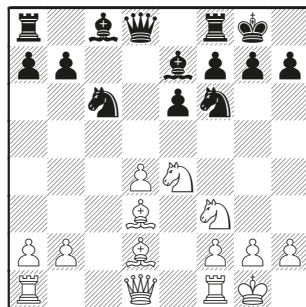
4...♗c6 5.♗c3 ♗f6 6.♗f4 ♗h5! This is the main reason why the early ♗f3 is considered less precise. The preferred way is to have a pawn on e3 instead of a ♗f3.

7.♗d2 7...♗e5 is an alternative, but Carlsen goes for another type of position.

7...♗f6 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3 9...♗e5, with the idea of supporting the knight by f4, is another option.

9...♗d6 10.e4 With the e5-square covered, White doesn't have any other active ideas.

10...dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0



By a curious transformation, what we have on the board is a position usually arising from the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.ed cd 4.c4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 e6 6.♗f3 ♗b4 7.cd ♗d5 8.♗d2 ♗c6 9.♗d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♗e7, and now instead of the more usual 11.♖e2 or 11.a3 White had played 11.♗e4 to which Black replied 11...♗f6.

13.♖c2!? Threatening to take on f6 and h7. Carlsen chooses a rare move and steers the game clear of any theoretical debate.

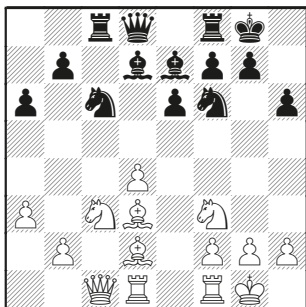
13.♖e2 has been played more often.

13...h6 14.♖ad1 ♗d7 Black doesn't have another option for how to develop the ♗d7 - the ♖c2 eyes the ♗c6, so a fianchetto is out of question for Black.

15.a3 ♗c8 16.♗c3 a6 Black wants to expand on the queenside, possibly play ...b5-b4 and then increase his control over d5 by ...♗b4-d5. White needs to organise something in the centre (to try to push d5) or on the kingside. For now his pieces are not ready for either option, so Carlsen tries to improve them.

IN ROUND 7 CARLSEN OPENED WITH 1.F4 AGAINST ADAMS, WAS LOST BY MOVE 13, BUT SOMEHOW SURVIVED AND EVEN WON THE GAME. IT WAS OBVIOUS, HOWEVER, THAT CARLSEN'S PLAY WAS FAR FROM HIS DESIRED LEVEL

17. ♖c1

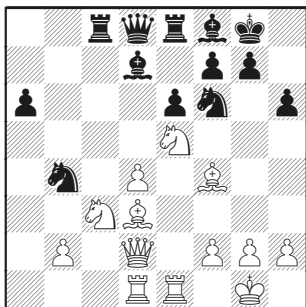


Not only threatening to take on h6 (which is easily parried) but the start of a deep plan to improve the position of his pieces. I call this plan deep because it involves some psychological aspects: Black will most likely play ...♞e8 to defend against a sacrifice on h6 and this move simply must be followed up with ...♞f8, solidifying the kingside. This means that Black's own queenside play is slowed down by two moves and Carlsen uses them to improve the position of his own pieces by managing to get the queen to d2 and off the c-file.

17. ♖fe1 b5.

17... ♞e8 18. ♖fe1 ♞f8 19. ♞f4 b5 20. ♖d2
Just in time and now White's position looks much more harmonious.

20...b4 21.axb4 ♜xb4 22. ♞e5!?



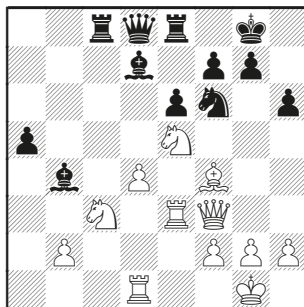
22. ♞b1 is an alternative, but this gives Black a tempo after 22... ♞bd5 as now he threatens ...♞b4 23. ♞e5 ♞b5 with an extremely solid position for Black. (23... ♞b4? 24. ♞xh6!).

22... ♞xd3 23. ♖xd3 Now the pawn on a6 hangs and again Carlsen uses the time Black spends on its defence to bring his pieces closer to the kingside.

23...a5 24. ♖f3 Now the ♖d8 cannot move because of ♞h6. I find it very instructive to follow how Carlsen uses both the initiative and the theme of domination in his games!

24... ♞b4? Black's position is passive and Nepomniachtchi seeks activity. However, this move is a tactical mistake.

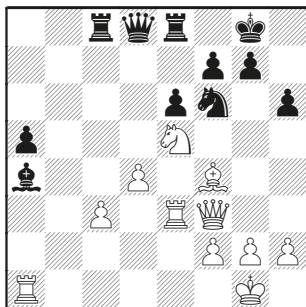
25. ♞e3



White still keeps an advantage after this, but this is the first warning sign for White in this game - he missed a tactical shot.

25. ♞xh6! ♞xc3 (25...gxf6? 26. ♞e4 ♞e7 27.d5! exd5 28. ♞xd5! ♞c7 29. ♞ed1+- Black is hopelessly tied down.) 26.bxc3 gxf6 27. ♖g3+ ♜h7 (27... ♜f8? 28. ♞d3 ♞f3 wins for White.) 28. ♞xf7 ♖e7 29. ♖d3+ ♜g8 (29... ♜g7 30. ♞e5 ♖g6) 30. ♖g6+ ♜f8 31. ♞d6 ♖g7 32. ♖d3 with a very strong initiative.

25... ♞xc3 26.bxc3 ♞a4 27. ♞a1?!



Carlsen switches his attention to the queenside now, especially the a5-pawn. But this is an imprudent move after which Black is out of danger.

27. ♖c1! is a prophylactic idea to try to prevent the bishop from transferring to the b1-h7 diagonal. Now White threatens to take on h6 and follow up with ♖f4 and ♖g3 27... ♗f8 (27... ♗e7 28.c4; 27... ♗xd4? doesn't work in view of 28. ♖a1! ♗d2 29. ♖e4, winning the ♗a4.) 28. ♖d3 with the idea to push c4 and White has quite a dominating position. (28. ♗xh6? doesn't work now in view of 28... gxh6 29. ♖f4 ♗d5! and f7 is defended - this was the idea behind 27... ♖f8).

27... ♗c2 28.h3 This is Carlsen's idea: he intends to show that the bishop is short of squares on the b1-h7 diagonal (except for the h7-square). This move also eliminates all tactics based on taking on d4 and mating on c1.

28... ♗f5? 28... a4 29. ♖c1 ♗h7 30.c4. White doesn't have any other active ideas. 30... ♗xd4 31. ♖d1 ♗b2 32. ♗xh6 ♖c5 33. ♗f4 with unclear play.

29.g4! ♗h7 30.c4 30.g5 was also tempting: 30... ♗d5 (30... hxg5 31. ♗xg5 ♗d5 32. ♗xf6 ♗xf3 33. ♖xf3 gxf6 34. ♗d7 ♗g7 35. ♗xf6 ♖h8 36. ♗xh7 ♖xh7 37. ♖xa5 is winning for White) 31. ♗xf7! ♗b6 32. ♗d6 ♗xe3 33. ♗xe3 h5 34. ♗xc8 ♖xc8 35. ♖xa5! ♗f5 36. ♖a1, with an advantage to White

even though Black can hope to establish a blockade on the light squares.

30... ♗d7 30... ♗xd4 31. ♖d1 ♗a7 32. ♗xh6 ♖f8 33. ♗g5 White keeps the initiative here thanks to the great activity of his pieces.

31. ♗c6? Played quickly by Carlsen and this is the exact moment when he starts to make big mistakes.

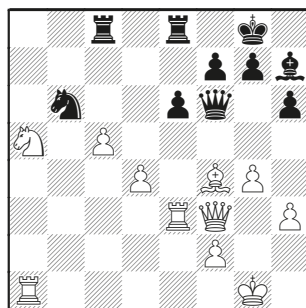
31.c5 ♗xe5 32. ♗xe5 followed by ♖ea3, c6-c7 would give White good winning chances.

31... ♗f6 Black is out of the woods now.

32. ♗xa5 ♗b6 Now both pawns on c4 and d4 are hanging. Black will win one back and the position should be drawish.

32... ♗xd4? 33. ♖d1 ♗a7 34. ♗b7 wins for White in view of the fork on d6.

33.c5??



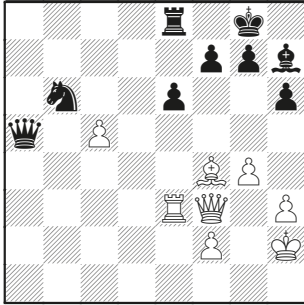
Carlsen admitted that he didn't see that Black can simply take that pawn since White's ♖a1 is hanging!

33. ♖ea3 ♗xc4 34. ♗xc4 ♖xc4 35. ♖a8 will soon enough end in a draw.

33... ♖xc5 34.dxc5? This loses another pawn.

34. ♗e5 ♗xf3 35. ♖xf3 should still be a draw.

34... ♗xa1+ 35. ♗h2 ♗xa5



36. ♖c6?? The final howler. Carlsen again missed his opponent's next move.

36. cxb6 was the only way to play 36... ♖xb6 37. ♖b3 and White will fight for a draw being a pawn down.

36... ♖a4 Now White will be a whole piece down. It seems that for the second time Carlsen missed a 'long' move, first when he missed that the ♖f6 was attacking the ♖a1 and now the ♖a4 attacking the ♖f4.

37. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 38. c6 ♖b6 39. c7 f6 40. ♖b3 ♖c8

0-1

This was probably the first time in Carlsen's career that he made three huge oversights in four moves (and the only move that wasn't a blunder was an escape from a check).

What is perplexing is that he consistently missed his opponent's next move! This inconsistency in his game, playing well and then suddenly dropping his level, is what plagued him throughout the whole year and it seems that he still cannot find a cure for it. It must be admitted, though, that his inconsistency is much more stable than what for the vast majority of the players is best play!



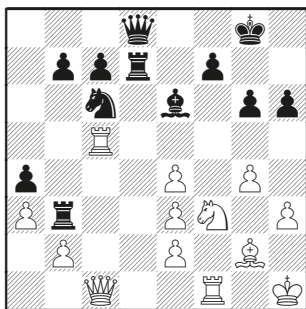
CARLSEN VS NEPOMNIACHTCHI (0:1): THIS WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST TIME IN CARLSEN'S CAREER THAT HE MADE THREE HUGE OVERSIGHTS IN FOUR MOVES (AND THE ONLY MOVE THAT WASN'T A BLUNDER WAS AN ESCAPE FROM A CHECK)

CARUANA FORCED TO WIN

The win against Carlsen brought Nepomniachtchi to +3, half a point ahead of Caruana. In the last round Nepomniachtchi followed the 'new pragmatism' of the young generation and made a quick draw with Vachier-Lagrave. This left Caruana without a choice - he had to win.

Fabiano Caruana – Michael Adams

9th London Classic 2017, London



White is a pawn up, but what a pawn that is! The tower of tripled e-pawns is not a beautiful sight and Black is at least equal here.

28...♔g7 29.e5 Trying to do something with the useless pawns, but this allows Black to activate his bishop.

29...♙d5 30.♔g1 ♙e6 Black marks time, demonstrating the impregnability of his position.

31.♔f2 Defending e3 with the king may seem like progress, but in fact liberating the queen from the defence of the pawn doesn't bring much because she has no place to go!

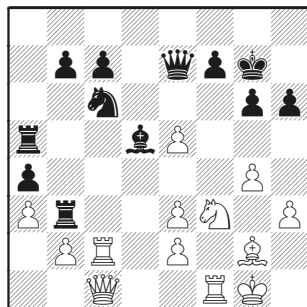
31...♞e7 32.♔g1 So Caruana goes back. In his own words, even though he knew he needed to win this, he would have taken the repetition here.

32.♞c2 ♜xb2!

32...♜d5 But Adams decides to play on!

33.♜c4 ♜a5 Black transferred the rook from the d-file to the 5th rank, taking c5 away from the White rook.

34.♜c2 ♙d5?



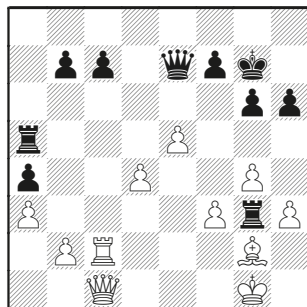
But this is an oversight, allowing White to untangle.

34...♞b6 would have been a good preparation for **...♙d5**, removing the rook from the knight attack from d4.

35.♙d4! ♙xd4 36.exd4 ♜g3 37.♜f3! Adams probably missed this.

37.♜f2 c5! 38.♜xc5 ♜xc5 39.♞xc5 ♞xc5 40.dxc5 ♙xg2 41.♜xg2 ♜xh3 is a very good endgame for Black, as White has too many pawn weaknesses. The engine says that White should still draw this after **42.♔f2 ♜b3 43.♜g1 ♜xb2 44.♜c1.**

37...♙xf3 38.exf3



CARLSEN'S CHESS TOUR VICTORY: THE RISK PAID OFF

The overall winner of the Grand Chess Tour was Carlsen. Even though a draw would have sufficed, Carlsen even managed to win with Black against Aronian in the last round (though he was again blundering and was probably lost). Vachier-Lagrave never came close to challenging him. His only win in the tournament was a smooth Najdorf win against Karjakin, but just like in the last Grand Prix tournament, when he needed to win a game to qualify, he seemed too afraid to risk and take his chances. This caution brought him only draws (and when he finally risked in the last round of the Mallorca Grand Prix, he even lost).

Except for maybe Carlsen, it seems to me that the modern players are too risk-averse in their approach. And when a situation happens where a win is all that matters, they are unable to adapt and their attempts are feeble at best.



**VACHIER-LAGRAVE
NEVER CAME CLOSE TO
CHALLENGING CARLSEN IN
LONDON.**

**JUST LIKE IN THE LAST
GRAND PRIX TOURNAMENT,
WHEN HE NEEDED TO
WIN A GAME TO QUALIFY,
VACHIER-LAGRAVE SEEMED
TOO AFRAID TO RISK AND
TAKE HIS CHANCES**



Carlsen receives the trophy from Malcolm Pein,
the organiser of the London Chess Classic

What a transformation. From the ugly tripled pawns to a beautiful pawn mass! Speaking from a winner's perspective, that is what happens when everything goes your way: the opponents frequently lend a helping hand! And from a perspective of a player in bad form, whatever you do, eventually you inevitably spoil it and hand it over to your opponent even without him doing anything at all!

38...c6?! 38...♖d8 is more precise, forcing the white queen to come to f4. 39.♗f4 (39.♙c4 doesn't work here in view of 39...♙d5 40.♗f4 b5! 41.♙b4 ♖xg2+ 42.♔xg2 c6 and White is tied down to the defence of the d4-pawn. Bringing the king to e3 doesn't help: 43.♔f2 ♗h4+! 44.♔e2 ♗xh3 45.♗f6+ ♔g8 46.♗xc6 ♗g2+ with inevitable perpetual check after 47.♔e3 ♗g1+ 48.♔e4 ♙d8) 39...♙xg2+ 40.♔xg2 c6 and the attack on d4 and b2 should provide enough counterplay for Black.

39.♔h2 ♙xg2+?! After the last two imprecisions White manages to stabilise the position.

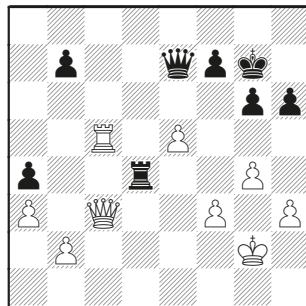
39...♗h4! 40.♗e3 (40.♗f4 ♙xg2+ 41.♔xg2 ♗d8! transposes to the note to Black's 38th move.) 40...♙b5 41.♗f2 ♙xg2+ 42.♔xg2 ♗d8 with enough counterplay for Black. White's pieces are not sufficiently coordinated to keep Black's activity in check. 43.♙c4 ♗b6 44.♙c2 ♗d8.

40.♔xg2 ♙d5 40...♗d8 41.♙c4! is the difference compared to 38...♗d8. Now White defends the pawn on d4 with his rook, at the same time attacking a4 and tying down the ♙a5 to its defence.

41.♙c4 Now White has established control and Black tries his last chance at activity.

41...c5 Not wanting to sit passively Adams opens up the position. This should have given him good chances to save the game.

42.♙xc5 ♙xd4 43.♗c3



43...♗d8? 43...♙d3! was the last chance, with decent drawing chances in the queen endgame after 44.♗xd3 ♗xc5 45.♗c3 ♗b6 46.e6+ (46.♔g3 is a slower approach, possibly giving more practical chances.) 46...f6 47.♗b4 ♗xe6 48.♗xb7+ ♔g8.

44.♙c8 This is good enough to win.

44.e6! would have won much faster. 44...fxe6 45.♙c7+ ♔f6 46.h4! Probably this was missed by Caruana. The idea is to liberate h3 for the king.

44...♗b6 45.♙e8 ♙e7.

45...g5 46.♙e7 ♔g8 46...♔f8 47.♙xb7 ♗xb7 (47...♙xg4+ doesn't work because 48.hxg4 ♗xb7 49.♗b4+ exchanges the queens. 49...♗xb4 50.axb4 ♔e7 51.f4 with an easily winning pawn endgame.) 48.♗xd4 and with two extra pawns White should win.

47.e6! 47.♙xb7? ♙xg4+!

47...fxe6 48.♗c2 The black king will see no end of trouble now.

48...♔f8 49.♙h7 ♗c6 50.♗xc6 After many hours of play Caruana chooses the more practical way, entering a rook endgame where there is no need to calculate long forcing lines with mating attacks.

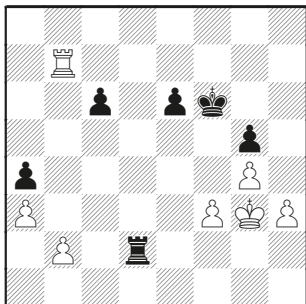
50.♙h8+ ♔e7 51.♗h7+ ♔d6 52.♙d8+ ♔c5 53.♗c2+ ♙c4 54.♗d3 is winning



DEFINITELY A DESERVED WIN AT THE LCC FOR CARUANA, WHO SHOWED MATURE CHESS IN THIS EVENT. HE HAD A GOOD TOURNAMENT STRATEGY, KNOWING WHAT TO PLAY FOR AGAINST EACH PLAYER

according to the engine. Funnily enough, Caruana couldn't escape his fate of entering (and winning!) an endgame with queens and rooks while attacking the opponent's king - his last tie-break game against Nepomniachtchi was exactly that type of endgame!

50...bxc6 51.♖xh6 ♔f7 52.♕g3 ♖d2
53.♖h7+ ♕f6 54.♖b7



White is a pawn up, but all Black's pawns are isolated and this makes the endgame untenable for Black.

54...♕e5 55.h4 gxh4+ 56.♕xh4 ♕f4
57.♖f7+ ♕e3 58.♕g3 Now the g-pawn marches.

58...♖d1 59.g5 ♖g1+ 60.♕h4 ♖g2 61.♖f6
e5 62.g6 ♖xb2 63.♕g5 ♖g2+ 64.♕h6
♖h2+ 65.♕g7 c5 66.♕f7 c4 67.g7 ♖h7
68.♖a6

1-0

This was Adams's last 'early Christmas present' and one that forced a tie-break for first place.

Even though he played a very long game in the last round (and the tie-break was after it finished) while his opponent had a very short one, Caruana dominated the tie-break.

THE BLITZ: WHAT CARUANA DIDN'T WIN AGAINST NEPOMNIACHTCHI

Somewhat enigmatically, it seemed that the players in London were unable to win when they were given an extra piece. We saw what Nakamura didn't win against Carlsen and the following shows what Caruana didn't win against Nepomniachtchi in the first blitz game.

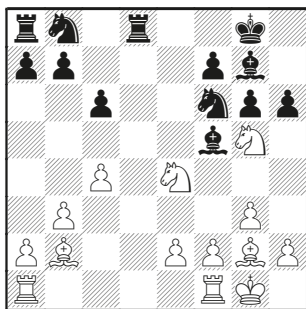
Ian Nepomniachtchi – Fabiano Caruana

9th London Classic, London

1.♠f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 c6 6.b3 d6 7.d4 e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♙b2? 9.♙a3 is the theoretical move.

9...e4 10.♙xd8 ♖xd8 11.♘g5 ♙f5 12.♘c3 h6 Black is already much better, but what White does next is hard to believe.

13.♘cxe4??



13.♘h3 was the only move.

13...♘xe4 14.♙xg7 hxg5 and Black is a clear piece up. The fact that the game lasted for 67 moves and ended in a draw is a mystery to me.

½-½

I expected this miss to affect Caruana, but he went on to win the next game confidently and with it the tie-break 2.5-1.5.

**NEPOMNIACHTCHI
REMINDED US THAT
WHEN THINGS ARE
GOING WELL FOR HIM
HE CAN EASILY PLAY ON
PAR WITH THE BEST
IN THE WORLD.
IT IS NOT FOR NOTHING
THAT HE HAS A 4-0 LIFETIME
SCORE AGAINST CARLSEN**

CARUANA DESERVED TO TRIUMPH

Definitely a deserved win at the LCC for Caruana, who showed mature chess in this event. He had a good tournament strategy, knowing what to play for against each player: starting with the QGA to draw against Carlsen in Round 1, then the Taimanov to sharpen things up against Karjakin, then the solid Petroff to draw against Vachier-Lagrave. And at the end it was his fighting spirit (and Adams's generosity) that led him all the way to the triumph.

Nepomniachtchi reminded us that when things are going well for him he can easily play on par with the best in the world. It is not for nothing that he has a 4-0 lifetime score against Carlsen. If only he could solve the problem of his ups and downs...

EVENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE FIRST PART OF 2018

The London Classic was the last classical elite event in 2017. The new year kicks in with the 80th edition of the Tata Steel in Wijk aan Zee in mid-January where 5 (Kramnik, Mamedyarov, So, Caruana and Karjakin) of the 8 Candidates are playing. The countdown to the Candidates Tournament in Berlin (10-28 March) begins.

FINAL STANDINGS - 2017 LONDON CHESS CLASSIC

POS.	PLAYER		GTC POINTS	PRIZE MONEY
1	GM FABIANO CARUANA	2780	12	\$62,500
2	GM IAN NEPOMNIACHTCHI	2764	10	\$62,500
T-3	GM MAGNUS CARLSEN	2874	7	\$31,667
T-3	GM MAXIME VACHIER-LAGRAVE	2804	7	\$31,667
T-3	GM WESLEY SO	2784	7	\$31,667
6	GM HIKARU NAKAMURA	2806	5	\$20,000
7	GM LEVON ARONIAN	2805	4	\$15,000
8	GM SERGEY KARJAKIN	2782	3	\$15,000
T-9	GM VISWANATHAN ANAND	2770	1.5	\$15,000
T-9	GM MICHAEL ADAMS	2731	1.5	\$15,000

**BOW TO THE CHAMPION: FABIANO CARUANA****FINAL RESULT - GRAND CHESS TOUR 2017**

POS.	PLAYER		GTC POINTS	PRIZE MONEY
1	GM MAGNUS CARLSEN	2874	41	\$245,417
2	GM MAXIME VACHIER-LAGRAVE	2804	38	\$207,917
3	GM LEVON ARONIAN	2805	29	\$91,250
4	GM HIKARU NAKAMURA	2806	25	\$77,500
5	GM FABIANO CARUANA	2780	24	\$95,000
6	GM SERGEY KARJAKIN	2782	23.5	\$75,000
T-7	GM IAN NEPOMNIACHTCHI	2764	22.5	\$100,000
T-7	GM WESLEY SO	2784	22.5	\$79,167
9	GM VISWANATHAN ANAND	2770	15.5	\$75,000

LONDON CLASSIC BRITISH KNOCKOUT



Taking over: Luke McShane, the 2017 champion vs the 2016 champion, Nigel Short

LUKE MCSHANE'S DESERVED VICTORY

By IM Shaun Taulbut

Photo by: GCT/LCC/BCM

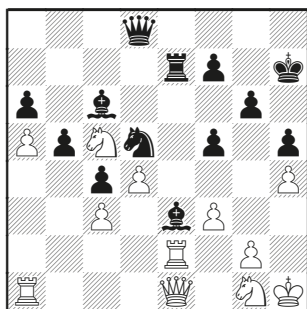
The substantial prize fund of £50,000 for the British Knockout provides a very good opportunity for the top British players. As a result, the field was very strong with only Michael Adams absent, playing in the London Chess Classic.

The Knockout gives us a good chance to assess the top strength of British chess and see who is advancing, stagnating or falling behind. British chess needs new talent and needs to improve significantly. Events like the Knockout play a significant role in highlighting the status and strength of top chess players in Britain and, therefore, deserves attention.

In the previous issue of BCM we gave some coverage of the British Knockout. Here, we will analyse what we consider to be the most interesting games from the 2017 event.

Eight players took part. The quarter-final pairings were as follows: Nigel Short against Alan Merry, Matthew Sadler against Jonathan Rowson, David Howell against Jonathan Hawkins and Luke McShane against Gawain Jones.

The first game between Nigel Short and Alan Merry was better for the younger player but he missed his way in a complex position and Nigel Short queened a pawn.



The critical stage of the game is reached; the pawn on a6 is vulnerable but Black has active pieces.

32...♙f4

A pity; 32...b4 is very good, creating a passed c-pawn and allowing the black queen's bishop to reach b5, eg. 33.cxb4 (33.♘h3 ♙b5 34.♘e4 fxe4 35.♙xe3 ♘xe3 36.♙xe3 exf3 37.♙xf3 b3, with a big advantage for Black) 33...c3 34.♘h3 ♙b5 35.♙aa2 ♙xe2 36.♙xe2 ♙d2 37.♘g5+ ♖g8 38.♙f2 c2 39.♘d3 ♙e3 40.♙f1 ♙c7, winning for Black.

33.♙xe7 ♘xe7 34.♘h3 Now White is clearly better as the knight on h3 is a strong defender.

34...♙h6 35.♘xa6 f4 36.♘b4 ♙a8 37.a6 ♘f5 38.a7 ♘xh4 39.♙e5 ♘xf3 40.♙b8 ♙h4 41.♙xa8 ♘g5 42.♙c8 f3 43.a8♙

1-0

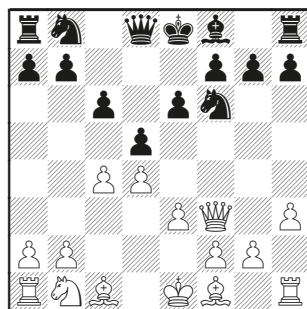
Nigel Short also won the second game to win the match 2-0 and progress to the semi-finals.

Matthew Sadler played well, created a stable position early on and defeated Jonathan Rowson in the following game:

Matthew Sadler - Jonathan Rowson

ch-GBR KO 2017 London

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♙g4 5.h3 ♙xf3 6.♙xf3 e6



Black has surrendered his bishop for a solid position.

7.♘c3 ♘bd7 8.♙d2 ♙d6 9.0-0-0 Castling queenside does pose the question as to where Black should castle; Black has to reckon with White starting a bayonet attack with g4.

9...♙c8 9...♙e7 would leave Black the option of castling queenside; now Black is committed.

10.♙b1 0-0 Castling into an attack is not easy but Black can still defend.

11.g4 White has the edge but Black should be able to gain enough play; in practice the position is easier for White to play.

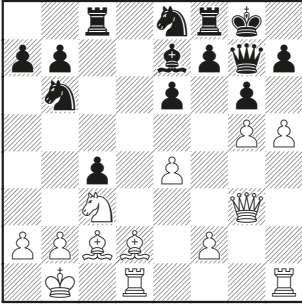
11...dxc4 11...♙e7 12.g5 ♘e8 13.h4 dxc4 14.♙xc4 ♘d6 15.♙e2 is better for White but may be preferable.

12.♙xc4 c5 13.♙b3 c4 13...cxd4 14.exd4 ♘b6 15.g5 ♘fd5 16.♘xd5 exd5 17.♙xd5 ♘xd5 18.♙xd5 ♙e7 19.♙xd8 ♙fxd8 20.♙e3 and White is better with his extra pawn but this is still a possibility.

14.♙c2 ♘b6 15.e4 ♙e7 16.g5 ♘e8

17. ♖g3 g6 Not 17... ♖xd4 when 18. ♙e3 wins the black queen immediately.

18. h4 ♖xd4 19. h5 ♖g7



Black has won a pawn but now his kingside becomes compromised.

20. e5 With the deadly threat of ♘e4 and ♘f6+ followed by a later hxc6.

20... ♘d5 21. ♘xd5 exd5 22. ♙c3 White now has the deadly threat of e6 with a discovered attack on the Black queen.

22... ♖d8 23. ♙d4 Calmly preventing black from playing ...d4 blocking the bishop.

23... b6 23... ♘c7 24. hxc6 fxc6 25. e6 traps the queen.

24. e6 f6 25. hxc6 hxc6 26. ♖h6 The pawn on g6 cannot be defended so Black resigned.

1-0

The second game was drawn, so Matthew Sadler went through into the semi-finals.

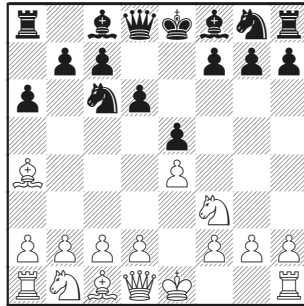
David Howell won the following heavyweight struggle against Jonathan Hawkins:

David Howell was ahead in the classical, but Luke McShane equalised in the Rapid

David **Howell** - Jonathan **Hawkins**

ch-GBR KO 2017 London

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 d6



The solid Steinitz Deferred is a good choice.

5. 0-0 ♙g4 6. c3 ♖f6 7. d3 Black is planning to exchange on f3, doubling White's pawns at the expense of the two bishops; this plan is strong.

7... ♘ge7 8. ♙e3 ♙xf3 9. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 10. gxf3 0-0-0 Black has the superior pawn structure; worth consideration was 10... g5.

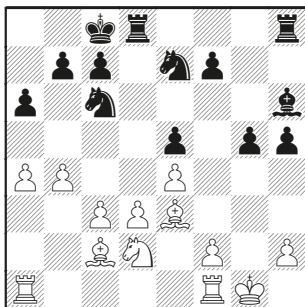
11. f4 An important move, undoubling the pawns.

11... g6 12. fxe5 dxe5 13. ♙c2 h5 Black prepares to exchange the dark-squared bishops, nullifying the White bishop pair.



14.♘d2 g5 15.b4 Not 15.♙xg5 ♖g8 when 16.h4 f6 wins a piece.

15...♙h6 16.a4



White is now threatening b5 to open up the queenside, so Black decides to exchange pieces.

16...♘d4 17.cxd4 exd4 White must return the piece.

18.♘c4 dxe3 19.fxe3 Black is weak down the f-file so he tries to gain counterplay by attacking b4.

19...♘c6 20.♖ab1 ♙f8 21.d4 ♘xb4 22.♙b3 White has the edge with his better pieces.

22...f6 23.♖xf6 g4 24.♘a5 ♙e7 Not 24...b6 25.♙e6+ ♗b8 26.♖xb4 ♙xb4 27.♘c6+ ♗b7 28.♘xb4, which wins two pieces for a rook with a winning advantage.

25.♖f7 ♖he8 26.♙e6+ ♗b8 27.♖xe7 ♖xe7 28.♙f5 c5 Black is in difficulties down the b-file.

29.dxc5 ♖e5 30.♖xb4 ♖xc5 31.♘xb7 ♖c1+ 32.♗f2 ♖d2+ 33.♗g3 ♖g1+ 34.♗f4 ♖xh2 35.♘a5+ ♗c7 36.♖b7+ ♗d6 After 36...♗d8 37.♘c6+ ♗e8 38.♗g5 ♖f1 39.♙g6+ ♗f8 40.♗h6 and mate by ♖b8 cannot be avoided.

37.e5+ ♗d5 38.♖d7+ ♗c5 39.e6 ♖f1+ 40.♗e4 Black cannot stop the e-pawn

queening, when the new queen will be delivering mate, so he resigned.

40...g3 41.e7 g2 42.e8♖ g1♖ 43.♖e7+ ♗b6 44.♖b4♞

1-0

The second game was drawn, so David Howell went through to the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals Luke McShane beat Nigel Short 3-2 and David Howell beat Matthew Sadler 3-2, Luke McShane winning the following game against Nigel Short

Luke McShane - Nigel Short

ch-GBR KO 2017 London

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 b6 Black gives his queen's bishop the option of b7 or a6. Exchanging the light-squared bishops is well motivated.

4.♘f3 ♘e7 After 4...♙a6 5.♙xa6 ♘xa6 6.♖e2 ♘b8 7.0-0 with an edge for White.

5.c3 Temporarily preventing ...♙a6 because of ♖a4 after exchanges on a6.

5...Qd7 6.♘d3 ♙a6 7.0-0 c5 8.♖e1 ♘ec6 9.♙c2 White chooses to retain the bishop.

9...h6 10.a3 g5 Black expands on the kingside; at the moment his king is safe.

11.h3 ♙e7 12.♘bd2 cxd4 13.cxd4 h5 14.♘f1 ♖g8 14...g4 15.♘g5 is slightly better for White with the outpost on g5.

15.♘g3 g4 After 15...h4 16.♘h5 with advantage to White.

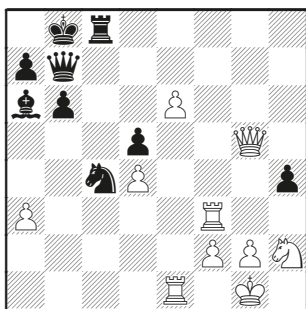
16.hxg4 h4 If 16...hxg4 17.♘h2 and the pawn on g4 will fall.

17.♘h5 ♖xg4 18.♙e3 White defends d4 and Black still has to solve the problem of where to put his king.

18...♖b7 19.♙h7 ♘d7 20.♘h2 White wins the exchange; the rook has no retreat squares.

20...♖g6 21.♙xg6 fxg6 22.♘f4 ♘f8 23.♖g4 Black's position has weaknesses: he is not able to consolidate and use his bishops.

23...0-0-0 24.♘xe6 ♘xe6 25.♖xe6+ ♖b8 26.♖ac1 ♘a5 27.♖xg6 ♘c4 28.♙g5 ♘xb2 29.♖c3 ♘c4 30.♖f3 ♙xg5 31.♖xg5 ♖c8 32.e6



The e-pawn is a winner; Black pulls his pieces to defend e8.

32...♘d6 33.e7 ♙b5 34.♖f8 ♙e8 35.♖xh4 ♘e4 36.♘g4 ♖a8 37.♘f6 ♖xe7 38.♖h8 Pinning and winning the black pieces on the back rank.

1-0

AS THE TITLE PASSED FROM NIGEL SHORT TO LUKE MCSHANE, THIS OUTCOME IS ALSO A SYMBOLIC ONE, POINTING TO A NEW GENERATION FIRMLY ESTABLISHING ITSELF AT THE TOP OF BRITISH CHESS

LUKE MCSHANE QUICKER IN THE FINAL

The final was comprised of two sections - a classical section followed by a rapid section.

David Howell was ahead in the classical, but Luke McShane equalised in the Rapid, leading to a blitz play-off. Luke McShane was stronger in the quicker time limit play-off, winning both games.

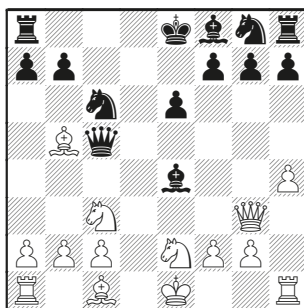
Luke McShane - David Howell

ch-GBR KO 2017 London

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 4.h4 c5 5.dxc5 ♘c6 6.♙b5 ♖c7 7.♖xd5 e6 8.♖f3 ♖xe5+ 9.♘e2 ♙e4 10.♖g3 ♖xc5

After 10...♖xg3 11.♘xg3 ♙xg2 12.♖g1 a6 13.♙a4 ♙d5 14.♘d2 with the threat of c4 is good and after 14...e5 15.♘f5, with a slight edge for White

11.♘bc3

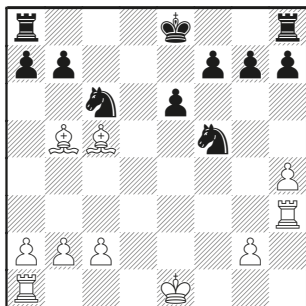


White has a lead in development now which is dangerous.

11...♘f6 12.♙g5 A mistake: 12.♙e3 is strong, eg 12...♖d6 13.♙f4 ♖d7 14.♖d1 ♖c8 15.♘d4 with a big initiative for White.

12...♙d6 13.♙e3 White has lost his advantage.

13...♔xc3+ 14.♘xc3 ♕xg3 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4
16.fxg3 ♘xg3 17.♖h3 ♘f5 18.♕c5



White has had to sacrifice a pawn to create some active play.

18...h5 19.0-0-0 a6 20.♕xc6+ bxc6
21.♖b3 Clever play; White has good play for the rook on b7.

21...♖h6 22.♖b7 ♖d8 Giving up a pawn to swap rooks should be good enough for a draw.

23.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 24.♖xf7 ♖f6 24...♖g6 is best, attacking g2.

25.♖a7 e5 26.♖xa6 ♘h4 27.♖a7 ♖g6
Black blunders; 27...♖f1+ 28.♕d2 ♘xg2
29.♖xg7 ♘f4 30.a4 is better for White.

28.♕e7+ Winning a piece.

28...♔c8 29.♕xh4 ♖xg2 30.♖e7 g5
31.♖xe5 gxh4 32.♖xh5 ♖h2 33.♖h7
White has returned the piece for a better endgame.

33...♕d8 34.a4 ♕e8 35.a5 ♖h1+ 36.♕d2
♕d8 37.a6 ♖a1 38.a7 ♕c8 39.♕c3 h3
40.♖xh3 ♕b7 40...♖xa7 41.♖h8+ ♕b7
42.♖h7+ ♕b6 43.♖xa7 ♕xa7 44.♕d4
wins.

41.♖h7+ ♕b6 42.b4 ♖a4 43.♕b3 ♖a1
44.c4 c5 45.b5 ♖a5 46.♕c3 ♖a1 47.♕d3
♖a4 48.♖g7

1-0

Luke McShane played well and deserved the title of the 2017 British Knockout Champion. As the title passed from Nigel Short to Luke McShane, this outcome is also a symbolic one, pointing to a new generation firmly establishing itself at the top of British chess.

Final		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	10	A	Total
David Howell	2685	1	2	0	2	0	½	0	½	0	0	-	6
Luke McShane	2649	1	0	2	0	1	½	1	½	1	1	-	8

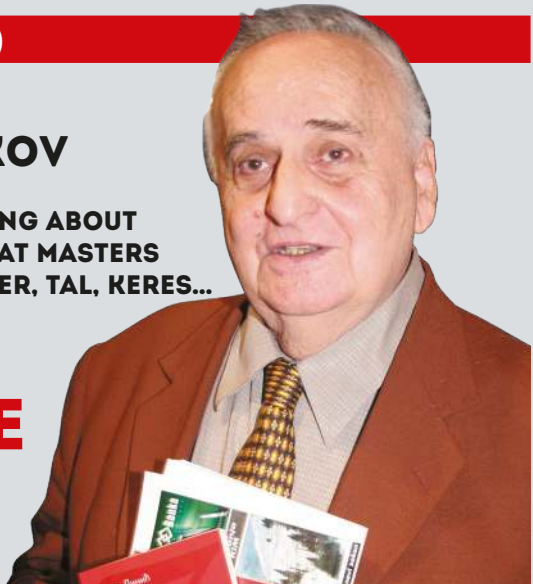
BRITISH KNOCKOUT CHAMPIONSHIP 2017 PRIZE MONEY ALLOCATION

Position	Player	Prize Money (£)
Winner	Luke McShane	14,750
Finalist	David Howell	11,750
Semi Finalists	Matthew Sadler	6,750
	Nigel Short	6,750
Quarter Finalists	Gawain Jones	2,500
	Jonathan Hawkins	2,500
	Alan Merry	2,500
	Jonathan Rowson	2,500
	Total	50,000

BCM INTERVIEW (PART 1)

INTERVIEW:
GM BORISLAV IVKOV
TAKES A WALK WITH BCM
DOWN MEMORY LANE, TALKING ABOUT
HIS ENCOUNTERS WITH GREAT MASTERS
SUCH AS BOTVINNIK, FISCHER, TAL, KERES...

STORIES ABOUT THE LEGENDS OF CHESS



By Milan Dinic

Photo: BCM, Svedok weekly (Serbia), National Archives of the Netherlands

Borislav Ivkov (born in 1933 in Belgrade, then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia - present Serbia) is one of the greatest Yugoslav and world chess players. He became the youth champion of Belgrade at the age of 14, and at the age of 17 he won the first World Junior Championship. Ivkov was three times champion of Yugoslavia and he also played four Interzonal tournaments. His peak was in the 1950s (when he was in the top 10 in the world) and in the 1960s. He participated in Interzonal tournaments in 1964, 1967, 1970, 1973, and 1979. In

the 1964 Interzonal in Amsterdam Ivkov qualified for the 1965 Candidates where he lost to Bent Larsen 5.5-2.5. Ivkov has 10 medals from the Olympics (six silver and four bronze medals) and five medals from European and World championships.

He won tournaments all across the world - Buenos Aires (1955), Santiago (1959), Lima (1959), Beverwijk (1961) Havana (1965), Stockholm (1971)... At these and many other events he was ahead of the likes of Larsen, Uhlmann, Portisch, Bronstein, Petrosian (when he was World Champion), Stein, Korchnoi, Jansa... His most notable tournament victory was in 1955 in Mar del Plata, where he was ahead of Miguel Najdorf, Svetozar Gligoric, Laszlo Szabo, Ludek Pachman, Oscar Panno, Herman Pilnik...

During his career, Ivkov played all the chess legends of his time: Smyslov, Tal, Petrosian, Fischer, Karpov, Portisch, Szabo, Korchnoi... just some of the great names which fell prey to Mr Ivkov's play.



Bent Larsen and Bora Ivkov, Beverwijk, 1961

Britain was also a good playing field for Ivkov - he won the first World Junior Championship held in Birmingham in 1951, and came third (behind Korchnoi and Olafsson) in Hastings at the 1955/56 tournament.

In chess circles in the former Yugoslavia, Bora Ivkov is known not just as a chess player, but also as an author of several notable books about chess and life. He is also considered to be a true gentleman, one of those people who can charm their way in and out of any conversation, showing their vast knowledge about almost every topic but never coming across as arrogant.

I met Mr Ivkov in a local restaurant close to his apartment in New Belgrade. As he slowly walked into the restaurant, the waiters quickly gathered, smiling at their well-known guest and saying 'Hello, Mr Boro'. He politely took his hat off to show his appreciation, smiled at them and proceeded to the table.

'Although I'm aware of what's going on in the chess world, I live in the past now' - he opened as we sat down and ordered drinks - 'I would, therefore, prefer if we talked mostly about the earlier times'. I said 'yes', with great pleasure as before me was a man who shared the chess board and chess life with the greatest players of all time.

Growing old - Ivkov is now 84 - has not prevented the great master from enjoying chess. On the contrary!

**'IN THE OLD DAYS IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO MAKE PAUSES
IN CHESS, LEARN SOMETHING
DIFFERENT AND BECOME
SOMETHING MORE THAN A
HUMAN CHESS MACHINE
WHOSE WHOLE WORLD
BEGINS AND ENDS IN 64
BLACK AND WHITE SQUARES'**

'I spend more time on chess now than when I was at my peak. Back then, it was possible to play and not work a lot - but today that's impossible. Back in the day it was enough to go from tournament to tournament and watch what others were doing. I learnt a lot from Milan Matulovic and Svetozar Gligoric, and Gliga was exceptionally studious about the game...'

As we agreed for the interview to focus mostly on old times and players, and the way chess was back then compared with today, Mr Ivkov pointed out one thing:

'To be honest, my whole playing life I did not understand chess. For me, chess was a way to see the world, and there are so many beautiful things to experience and learn out there... There are possibly two things more beautiful than chess - music and women. But, like music and women, chess needs understanding. And there are some great people who understood the link between chess and life so well...'

LASKER THE FIGURE

I started by asking - what was it like in the old days?

'In the old days it was possible to make pauses in chess, learn something different and become something more than a human chess machine whose whole world begins and ends in 64 black and white squares. Emanuel Lasker managed to do that exceptionally well and stage a comeback after not playing for several years. He is possibly the best player in history', says Ivkov and explains why...



Emanuel Lasker

‘Lasker was a Figure, a Character. Almost everyone else is only a chess player. Lasker was more than that. A great mathematician, someone who introduced psychology to chess, a philosopher. He nurtured interest in all the great problems and issues of humanity.

We are talking about someone who knew Einstein and even disputed some of his work when Einstein was, well, still is - Einstein!

If you want to understand chess, read Lasker’s analysis of games. For example, the analysis of the game between Pillsbury and Tarrasch in Hastings 1895. He explains the position in a way that few others can. You can truly relate to the meaning and the idea of things.’

A CHESS ANTI-EXAMPLE

Ivkov considered today’s players to be ‘too one sided - only interested in chess’.

‘I assume that the top players today are preoccupied with computers. Many years ago I read that Anand has several PCs in his flat and that they work even while he is asleep. I’m not sure if that is true, but I can believe it. It would be interesting to see what their other interests are...’

Several years ago, Ivkov was one of the speakers at a promotion of a book about Fischer and the 1992 rematch with Spassky. At one point during his speech, Ivkov noticed that in the audience there was a famous Serbian opera singer, Jadranka Jovanovic. He then told the story of how, when he was returning from a tournament abroad, during the long-haul flight most of the players took out their pocket sets and played or analysed games. However, Ivkov at one point noticed an unusual hat which belong to one of the female passengers a few seats in front... He was so intrigued that during the whole flight he was trying to find a way to politely approach that woman... as it turned out - that woman was the very person present at the promotion - the opera singer Jadranka Jovanovic!



The best prepared Yugoslav player:
Svetozar Gligoric

‘I am not a good example of a chess player. I’m an anti-example! Months passed with me not looking at the board in times when I was at my peak. I was interested in sport, movies... I would rush to finish a game just so I could go and listen to a performance of a French pianist I loved. I liked going to museums, theatres, boxing matches, football games!

In my time chess could have been played at an amateur level. Meaning that you could play without spending too much time studying it. Although we Yugoslavs were at the top, next to the Soviets, alongside the Hungarians, the most devoted chess labourer among us was Svetozar Gligoric. He studied chess seriously all his life, all the time!’

KARPOV AND BODYGUARDS



Anatoly Karpov (and Vasily Smyslov behind him, on the left)

But, times have changed and so has chess, Ivkov notices. I pointed out my impression that today

at tournaments and events top players seem to be very much separated from the audience. They are more like basketball stars who are ushered into the arena and then escorted out, with fans feeling a bit uncomfortable, gazing at the payers passing by, trying to catch their look so they could ask for an autograph.

‘It was very different in the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s... I’ll give you an example of chess life then... Before we left for Mar del Plata in 1955 we had the Yugoslav chess championship in Novi Sad, where Nikola Karaklajic won. We all stayed in the same hotel, Putnik, which had a nice conference room. There was a young Dalmatian man by the name of Mario who worked there, and he used to sing in the evening. After the round would finish and we had dinner, all of us would come down to that room, listen to him sing, play chess, cards, joke and drink, smoke... Everyone was there, including Gligoric’s wife, but not Gligoric. We were all as one apart from him. Only Gligoric would stay in his room because he was preparing for Mar del Plata...

As time passed I felt that sense of togetherness among players eroding. With Karpov came a big change, resembling something similar to what we have today. He introduced people who escorted him to and from the game, some security people... That was never appropriate and liked in the chess community. As times moved on, the distance between the players and the audience began to grow.’

THE BOTVINNIK GENERATION

The best chess was played by those in the so-called Botvinnik generation, says Ivkov. That generation included Keres, Smyslov, Bronstein, Boleslavsky, Averbakh, Kotov... They were followed by Petrosian, Taimanov, and then came Spassky, Tal, Polugaevsky, Stein, Korchnoi...

‘Back in the day the Soviets who played abroad were those who were sure to win tournaments. Smyslov, Keres, Bronstein, Korchnoi, Tal, Spassky... All of them were very friendly, nice people... They were all unique, but Bronstein was the most interesting

of them all. He always had intriguing stories to tell and he was very dynamic and, in a nice way, uncontrollable. In the USSR they probably thought he was a bit odd...

Then there is Yuri Averbakh. Not only an excellent player who participated in the amazing Zurich 1953 Candidates tournament, but also a great author in the field of chess theory and chess life in general. A tall man, over 6’3”, he was very good-looking and I remember Gligoric describing him as Apollo. His body was like a Greek statue!’

It is worth mentioning that Ivkov never lost to Botvinnik in their matches, but he didn’t win either...

‘With Botvinnik I played only three games. He was a quiet and a very private person. After becoming world champion he did not play chess for three years. As he himself confessed, he was very suspicious about other people. But overall he was straightforward.’

THE GREATEST GENTLEMAN IN CHESS: PAUL KERES



Paul Keres (r) playing Lajos Portisch (l), 1964

Paul Keres (1916 - 1975), is remembered as the eternal second: one of the greatest players who never played a match to become World Champion. It has been argued that he was never allowed to do so because he (alongside Alekhine) played in tournaments organised by the Nazis in 1942 and 1943. Ivkov remembers Keres as a kind and soft person who never showed any of the worries he carried on his shoulders.

‘He was the greatest gentlemen in chess! He carried himself in a very gracious and gentlemanly way. A very kind person’, said Ivkov.

‘I played four games with him and lost all of them! But it was a pleasure to lose to him as he was so gracious. He was very unfortunate in life - starting from his decision to play at a Nazi tournament in WW2, to health issues within his family. Smyslov was sent to tournaments instead of Keres.

But, looking at him and spending time with him, you could never tell there was something wrong in his private life. He was always smiling and ready to talk and tell a joke.’



THE GREATEST PLAYER WHO ENJOYED LIFE DESPITE BAD HEALTH: MIKHAIL TAL

Ivkov was very close to Mikhail Tal, who frequently played and appeared in Yugoslavia at the time.

‘Tal left the strongest impression on me... People only look at results but they don’t realise that Tal played with a third of his strength! He had health problems during the greater part of his life.

‘PEOPLE ONLY LOOK AT RESULTS BUT THEY DON’T REALISE THAT TAL PLAYED WITH A THIRD OF HIS STRENGTH! HE HAD HEALTH PROBLEMS DURING THE GREATER PART OF HIS LIFE... HE WAS PROBABLY THE GREATEST PLAYER WHO ALSO KNEW HOW TO ENJOY LIFE! EVEN COMPUTERS TODAY DON’T HAVE THE SAME BREADTH OF IDEAS AND CREATIVITY AS TAL’

Imagine if he had been healthy as Spassky - who is his peer and who was also an athlete?! He was probably the greatest player who also knew how to enjoy life! Even computers today don’t have the same breadth of ideas and creativity as Tal.’

Ivkov gave an account of the Candidates quarter-finals played in Bled in 1965. Ivkov lost that match to Larsen, while Tal beat Portisch. Tal later wrote that he and his second - Koblents - expected Ivkov to win.

‘My second at the match was IM Pera Smederevac, who was close to Tal, probably because they both liked to drink. While we went to sleep after dinner, Tal and Smederevac would sneak out and spend entire nights in a nearby inn, talking and drinking. Now, that wouldn’t be a problem had Tal not been playing the match against Portisch, which he actually won! Later on, Tal and I were best men to Pera Smederevac when he got married.’

However, Tal’s poor health was always lurking in the shadow.

‘In 1966 Tal and I were playing in Sarajevo. At the very beginning he got very ill and had to be quickly hospitalised. He was in a serious condition. When we went to visit him, however, he was smiling, optimistic and making jokes. Although he had long-term health problems [to the extent that he had to use morphine - BCM note], Tal was never down’, recalls Ivkov.

‘You would imagine that someone so physically fragile would be very cautious, but not Tal. At the 1966 Olympiad in Havana a night out almost cost him his head, because he got into a brawl with someone and barely got out of there alive. But, there he was again - with a cigarette, a drink, smiling and banging on the clock! That was Tal.’

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: What was Bobby Fischer like privately? Two reasons for why Spassky lost in Reykjavik? Garry Kasparov as a person and as a player...

THE RUSSIAN SUPERFINAL



SVIDLER'S EIGHTH RUSSIAN TITLE

By GM Aleksandar Colovic
Photo: Russian Chess Federation

Playing on home turf, Peter Svidler leveraged experience and skill to outwit the brightest talents and win the title for the eighth time! But it wasn't easy. In fact, the Russian Superfinal was a thriller.

Held in St. Petersburg from 3-14 December it comprised of the best crop of Russian talent - their brightest young prospects 22-year-old Vladimir Fedoseev and 21-year-old Daniil Dubov (19-year-old Vladimir Artemiev was busy winning the blitz section of the Elite Mind Games and reaching number 2 on the blitz rating list, behind Carlsen) in addition to the already established Nikita Vitiugov, current European Champion Maxim Matlakov, as well as Evgeny Tomashevsky. The other players were 7-time Russian Champion Peter Svidler, Ernesto Inarkiev, Vladimir Malakhov, last year's champion Alexander Riazantsev, Sanan Sjugirov, Evgeny Romanov and Sergey Volkov.

The start was dominated by the youngest. Fedoseev started with 4/4 and Dubov with 3.5/4 and it seemed they would fight it out between themselves, especially as none of the other players showed anything extraordinary. But from Round 5 the tournament dynamics started to change. Fedoseev conceded his first draw to Inarkiev while Dubov even lost to Tomashevsky.

In Round 6 Dubov drew (with Sjugirov) and Fedoseev lost with White to Malakhov. The same results were repeated in Round 7 - Dubov drew (with Matlakov) and Fedoseev lost (to Vitiugov).

And then, in Round 8, the derby game Fedoseev-Dubov took place.

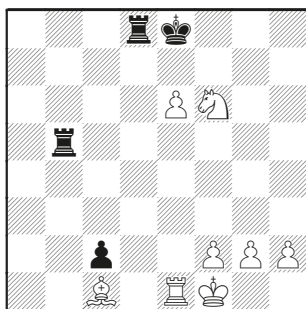
**THE EVENT
COMPRISED OF
THE BEST CROP
OF RUSSIAN TALENT**

THE DERBY

Thanks to a superior preparation in the Grünfeld Defence Fedoseev quickly obtained an advantage and soon after that a winning position. Then instead of finishing his opponent off without allowing counterplay, Fedoseev missed several winning possibilities and eventually blundered.

Vladimir Fedoseev – Danil Dubov

70th ch-RUS, St Petersburg



35...♙e7 Four pawns should suffice, but Fedoseev continues in extravagant style instead of wrapping things up.

36.♘d7 White still wins, of course, just that his pieces lack harmony and are scattered, it would have been more practical to eliminate the only danger, the pawn on c2, and then win easily. We will see later on that the stranded knight gives White only trouble.

36.♘g4 was simpler, consolidating and primarily dealing with Black's only hope, the c2-pawn. **36...♖b1 37.♘e3** not only attacking c2, but also threatening ♘f5 followed by e7. **37...♖c8 38.♘f5+ ♙f6 39.g4** with e7 to follow.

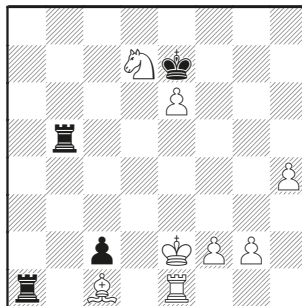
36...♖a8 37.h4? Black can save himself now. The other two logical moves should win without problems.

37.f4 ♖a1 38.♘e5 ♙xe6 39.♙e2 ♘d3; 37.♘e5 again it is good to bring the knight back. **37...♙xe6 38.♘c4+ ♙f6 39.♘e3** and

sooner rather than later the pawn on c2 will fall.

37...♖a1! ♖bb1, this was missed by Fedoseev.

38.♙e2



The only move to continue the game, but White cannot win anymore.

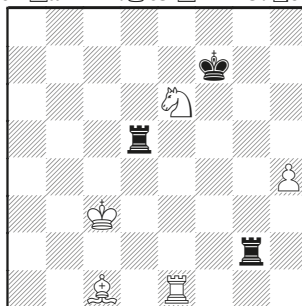
Black's point is that **38.♙g5+?** loses for White **38...♖xg5! 39.♖xa1 ♖b5!** and curiously enough, White loses the wayward knight on d7 after **40.♖c1 ♖b1 41.♙e2 ♖xc1 42.♙d2 ♖e1 43.♙xc2 ♖xe6 44.♘c5 ♖c6**.

38...♙xe6 39.♘f8+ ♙f7 Again we see the hapless position of the white knight.

40.♘d3 ♖d5+ The knight cannot be taken, but it is a source of constant worry for White, so he cannot keep his kingside pawns.

40...♙xf8? 41.♙h6+.

41.♙xc2 ♖a2+ 42.♙c3 ♖xf2 43.♘e6 ♖xg2



With only one pawn left on the board it is impossible to win.

44. ♖g5+ ♔g6 45. ♖h1 ♖c5+ 46. ♔d3
 ♜g3+ 47. ♙e3 ♜a5 48. h5+ ♔f5 49. ♜e4
 ♜a3+ 50. ♜c3

½-½

I thought that the saved game would inspire Dubov and depress Fedoseev, but in fact Dubov lost with White in Round 9 to Malakhov while Fedoseev beat Volkov with Black!

While the youngsters were battling it out, the more experienced players slowly crept it. Among them was Peter Svidler, who lost in Round 2 to Dubov (with White!) but then gradually found his way back into the tournament. In Round 3 he beat Volkov and in Round 5 he beat Romanov. Among the pursuers were also Vitiugov, who had a solid tournament without a loss, Malakhov and Tomashevsky.

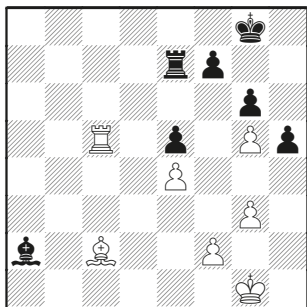
In the penultimate round the key game was between tournament leader Fedoseev on 6 points and Svidler on 5.

A DECISIVE SLIP

Things were really going Fedoseev's way. A draw would almost certainly have guaranteed him at least a shared first. And for a long time it seemed things were going in that direction...

Vladimir Fedoseev – Peter Svidler

70th ch-RUS 2017, St Petersburg



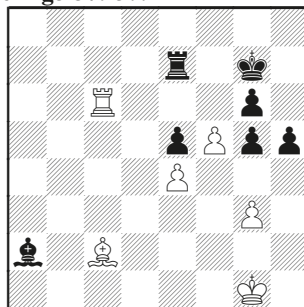
34...♔g7 What can be more drawish than this? But instead of just taking the result

that suited him, Fedoseev lunges forward. Admirable courage, undoubtedly, infinite self-confidence, most probably, but the history books remember the winner and not the spirit.

35.f4 It is still a draw after this, but the move shows White's willingness to fight for more.

35...f6 Decreasing the number of pawns.

36. ♜c6 fxg5 37.f5?!



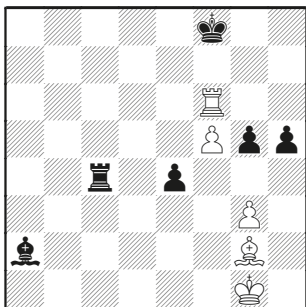
Here it is, the restless and untameable spirit of the young. And from Svidler's perspective, just like with Caruana elsewhere in this issue, you really need everything to go your way in order to win a tournament, which often means generous help from your opponents.

37.fxg5 is a simple draw as Black cannot possibly approach White's isolated pawns in view of his own weaknesses.

37...gxh5 38.exh5 ♔f8 Avoiding the check on g6 and all of sudden Black is a pawn up! It should still be a draw, but now it is Black who will start to play for a win. These changes in the trend of the game are most difficult to adapt to.

**THE START
 WAS DOMINATED
 BY THE YOUNGEST.
 BUT FROM ROUND 5
 THE TOURNAMENT
 DYNAMICS STARTED
 TO CHANGE**

39.♖h6 ♖c7 40.♙e4 ♖c4 41.♙g2 e4 42.♖f6+



42.♖xh5 e3 shows how dangerous the e-pawn is. 43.♖h8+ ♖e7 44.f6+ ♖xf6 45.♖f8+ ♖e7 46.♖f1 ♖d6 and White will suffer for a long time.

42...♙g7 43.♖g6+ ♖f7 44.♖xg5 ♖c1+ 45.♖f2 ♖c2+ 46.♙g1 ♖c1+ 47.♙f2 ♖c2+ 48.♙g1 e3 and even though White should still be able to make a draw, this is definitely not what he aimed at when sacrificing the pawn on move 37. Eventually Fedoseev blundered in a drawn position and lost.

0-1

UNCERTAINTY UNTIL THE VERY END

Coupled with Malakhov's win over Volkov the situation before the last round was quite complicated: Fedoseev, Vitiugov, Svidler and Malakhov were on 6, ahead of Dubov, Tomashevsky and Riazantsev on 5.5. The pairings for the decisive rounds included the direct duel Svidler-Malakhov, while Fedoseev was Black against tail-end Romanov and Vitiugov was Black against the other tail-end Volkov.

In spite of choosing the Leningrad Dutch in an attempt to win, Fedoseev was actually losing against Romanov and was lucky to draw. Volkov, in his favourite Nimzo-Indian with 4.f3, blundered early against Vitiugov and was lost by move 14. This made Vitiugov wait for the outcome of the game Svidler-Malakhov, a must-win for both if they were to catch Vitiugov.

Peter Svidler - Vladimir Malakhov

70th ch-RUS 2017, St Petersburg

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.♘c3 A somewhat peculiar choice, as it is considered that Black has several ways to obtain good play, but perhaps Svidler was counting on the effect of surprise.

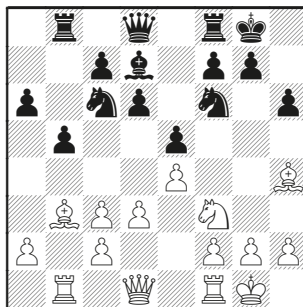
4...♙b4 4...♘d4 is also considered very good for Black, but in the World Cup Fedoseev beat Nakamura in this line and both Fedoseev and Svidler are from St. Petersburg... 5.♙c4 ♙c5 6.d3 c6 7.♘xe5 0-0 8.♘xf7! ♖xf7 9.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 10.♙e3 with an advantage to White: 1-0 (43) Fedoseev,V (2731)-Nakamura,H (2792) Tbilisi GEO 2017.

5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 ♙xc3 6...d6 7.♘e2!? is a relatively recent discovery, where Black has some problems to solve, so with the game move Black prevents this line.

7.bxc3 d6 8.♙g5 ♙d7 8...♖e7 with the idea of ...♘d8-e6 is the old main line and still playable today.

9.♖b1 Speaking of the St. Petersburg connection, here's a miniature won by Fedoseev in a rapid game. 9.♘d2 ♘e7?? 10.♙xf6 ♙xb5 11.♖g4 1-0 (11) Fedoseev,V (2731)-Domogaev,S (2408) Sochi 2017.

9...a6 10.♙a4 ♖b8 11.♙b3 h6 12.♙h4 b5

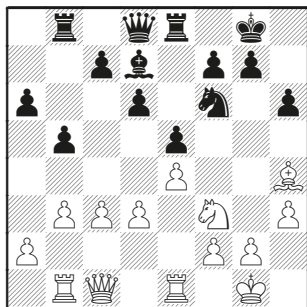


12...♘a5 13.d4 ♘xb3 14.dxe5! dxe5 15.axb3 and Black has some problems in

this symmetrical position because of the pin along the h4-d8 diagonal.

13.h3 ♖e8 14.♙c1 A somewhat mysterious queen move. White doesn't really threaten to prevent Black's next with ♙a3, but Malakhov anyway decides to eliminate the strong ♖b3.

14...♘a5 15.♞e1 ♘xb3 16.cxb3

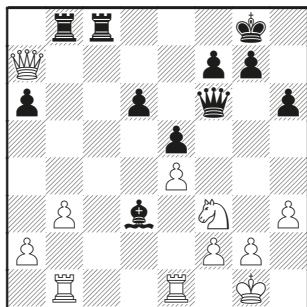


The position has simplified, but it's far from dry. White has a nagging edge thanks to the pin along the h4-d8 diagonal and the fact that he can move his central pawns more easily.

16...♙c6 17.c4 Black faces problems along the c-file because the queen needs to defend the ♘f6.

17...bxc4 18.♙xc4 ♙b5 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♙xc7 ♞ec8 White won a pawn, but Black hopes for compensation in view of the activated pieces.

21.♙a7 ♙xd3?



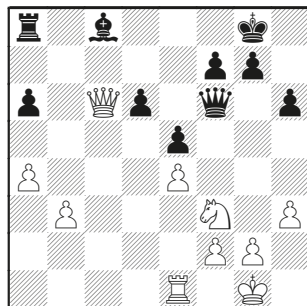
It turns out this is too hasty. Black is eager to get the pawn back but this allows White to activate his pieces and reclaim the initiative.

21...♙d8! was a rather difficult move to find and make. The immediate threat is ...♙b6, trapping the ♙a7. **22.♙e3 ♞c3 23.♞ed1 a5** securing a6 for the bishop and Black has enough activity as compensation for the pawn.

22.♞bd1 ♙b5 23.a4! ♞a8 Defending the pawn on a6 before moving the bishop.

24.♙b6 ♙c6 25.♞c1 ♙d7 25...d5 26.♘xe5! ♙xe5 27.♞xc6 ♞e8 28.♞c5 and White will remain a pawn up.

26.♞xc8+ ♙xc8 27.♙c6

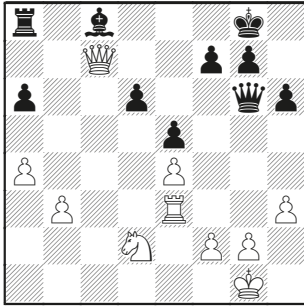


The transformation is obvious. White is totally dominating and wraps things up without allowing any chances. It is amazing that Svidler only needed a single mistake by Malakhov to win the game.

27...♙b8 28.♙c7 ♞a8 29.♙c6 Svidler was probably low on time, hence the repeating of the moves.

29...♙b8 30.♙c7 ♞a8 31.♞e3 Defending b3 in advance (anticipating ...♙e6) and intending to activate the rook along the third rank, either on the queenside or the kingside.

31...♙g6 32.♘d2



Many moves win as Black is paralysed. Svidler chooses to activate his knight, which also defends b3 and liberates the rook if necessary.

32...♖e6 33.♗d8+ ♔h7 34.♖d3 ♕b7 35.♗c7 35.♗xd6 was possible, but Svidler prefers to keep the queens as his is much more active than Black's.

35...♗c8 35...♕c8 36.♖d6.

36.♗xf7 Now the game is decided by a direct attack on the black king. Black's pieces are all stranded on the queenside and cannot help.

36...♗c6 37.♖c4 ♗xe4 38.♖g3 ♖g8 39.♖xd6 ♗b1+ 40.♕h2 ♕e4 41.♖e8

1-0

A beautifully controlled game by Svidler. He then went on to beat Vitiugov in the tie-break 2-0 and claim his record-breaking 8th (!) title of Russian Champion. The tie-break was a tricky task, since the players are good friends and Vitiugov has worked as Svidler's second.

In a tournament where passions were running high, Svidler's experience and composure triumphed for a record that will stand for a very long time.

The championship took place in St. Petersburg's State Museum of Political History of Russia



FINAL STANDINGS

	Player		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	R	P
1	Svidler, Peter	2763		½	0	1	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	11	7
2	Vitiugov, Nikita	2721	½		½	1	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	11	7
3	Dubov, Daniil	2677	1	½		½	0	½	0	1	½	½	1	1	11	6 ½
4	Fedoseev, Vladimir	2718	0	0	½		1	1	0	½	1	1	½	1	11	6 ½
5	Tomashevsky, Evgeny	2702	½	½	1	0		½	½	½	½	½	½	1	11	6
6	Riazantsev, Alexander	2651	½	½	½	0	½		½	½	1	½	½	1	11	6
7	Malakhov, Vladimir	2690	0	½	1	1	½	½		½	0	½	½	1	11	6
8	Inarkiev, Ernesto	2683	½	½	0	½	½	½	½		½	½	½	½	11	5
9	Sjugirov, Sanan	2650	½	½	½	0	½	0	1	½		½	1	0	11	5
10	Matlakov, Maxim	2738	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	½		½	0	11	4 ½
11	Romanov, Evgeny	2626	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	½		½	11	3 ½
12	Volkov, Sergey	2649	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	1	1	½		11	3

IT'S JUST A GAME, FOR CRYIN'
OUT LOUD, PULL YOURSELF
TOGETHER MAN!



CHESS & ART

DRAWING HUMOUR FROM THE CHESSBOARD

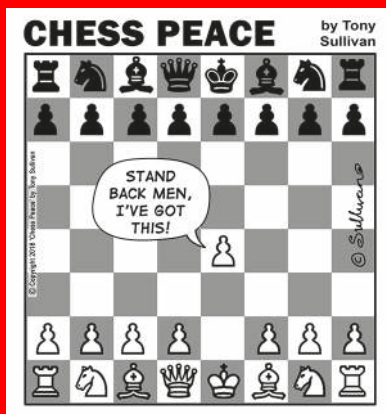
By Milan Dinic

A picture is worth a thousand words. An image - drawn or taken by a camera - can tell a whole life story in one frame. In politics, as in chess, cartoons are a witty and clever portrayal of the reality which is often grey rather than black and white. However, in chess, as in politics, the 'heroes' of cartoons - those at the very top of the game - don't always appreciate the way they are portrayed. But actors and processes in both chess and politics often share one thing - the irony and the tragicomedy of the drama, which are usually best summed up in a cartoon.

So, who are the people behind the pen who wittily epitomise a whole chess/life narrative in one drawing? Here is the story of one of them...

In 1983, aged 20, Tony Sullivan sent some cartoons to the South London Press Newspaper in Streatham, South London. The then Editor, Richard Wolveridge, rang him and said he loved the cartoons and wanted to employ him as a cartoonist for the South London Press group of newspapers including the South

London Business Press. Tony's first cartoon in the papers made its appearance in 1983. It all lasted until 2004, when he met a lovely Australian lady and decided to migrate 'Down under'. His cartoons appeared in various newspapers and magazines, notably the old 'Punch' satirical magazine. In 2004 he illustrated a book called 'Why are men so bloody stupid?' by the author William Barnes. Tony Sullivan also worked designing cartoon corporate Christmas cards and briefly taught cartooning during a summer camp in the U.S.



Sullivan's venture into the field of chess cartoons started in the late 1990s in the U.S. when he published his first chess cartoon from a series called 'The Bottom Line'. The cartoon was highly successful, which led to the author pondering the idea of a dedicated, single-panel chess cartoon entitled 'Chess

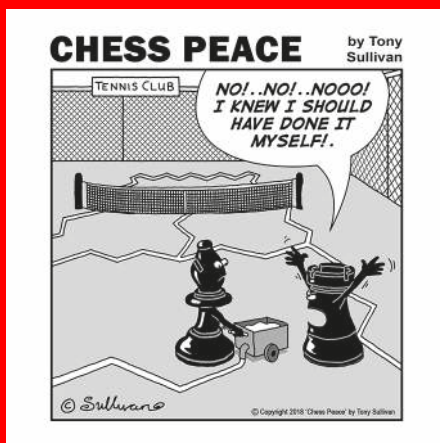
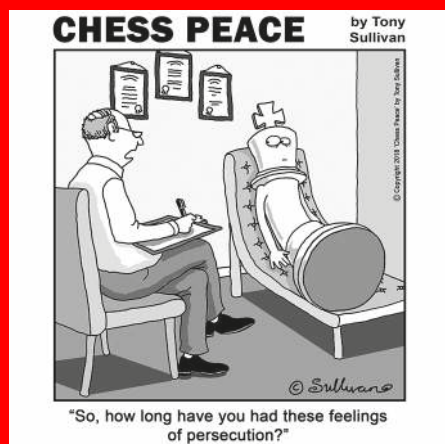
Peace', promoted in the book by the same name, soon to be published by the author. The publishing of the book - which celebrates chess through art - is going to be accompanied by a website about

chess cartoons, featuring Sullivan's work: <https://chesspeacecartoons.wordpress.com/>. The website offers a sample of the author's work, and is free of charge providing he is credited.

'I wanted to bring the chess pieces to life and give them a human personality, imagining how they would interact with each other both on and off the chessboard. I soon realised there was a huge scope for potential humorous situations', says Tony Sullivan.

Sullivan's chess cartoons have roots in his childhood interest in the game. While his siblings were happy playing draughts, he wanted to play with the 'big boys' and was fascinated by the complexity of the game, watching his dad and uncles playing chess.

'At the age of 8, my dad taught me to play. By age 9, I was beating him and continue to do so, much to his annoyance. When I was 12, as a member of an after-school chess team, I entered my first competitive game of chess and won a chess medal as part of that team. This was the pinnacle of my chess career! Unfortunately, it was around this time when the hormones began to kick in, so football and chasing girls became more of a focus...'



A DAY IN A LIFE OF A CARTOONIST

Cartoonists - like all artists - have their own ways...

'My day usually starts early, and a strong cup of caffeine is a must. To kickstart the creative process, I usually take the dog for a long walk to clear my head and then have a look at stories in the newspapers, magazines and sometimes other cartoons to start the creative juices flowing', says Sullivan.

But, unlike some other forms of art which are not constrained by time, cartoonists share the same destiny as journalists: living under the shadow of a deadline.

'When you work as a professional cartoonist there are deadlines to beat, so you can't wait for the cartoon fairy to drop ideas into your lap. Around 10am, I sit at my desk and spend around 2 hours writing about 15 cartoon ideas. It's good to walk away at this point, so, more often than not, I break for lunch. In the afternoon, I go back to the ideas I've written and sort out the 'good usable ideas' and put the others away in a folder for a later time. I then draw the cartoons that have potential and have them ready for publication.'

CREATING ART FROM WAR...

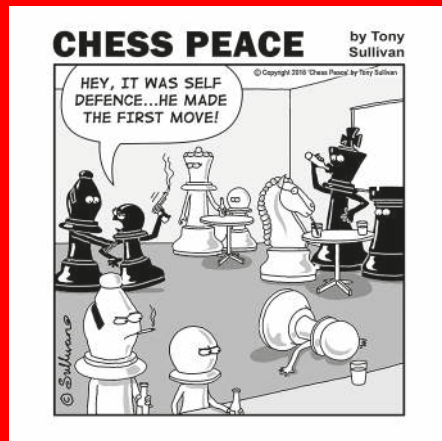
For Sullivan, the dynamics and tensions of the 64-square chess battlefield are a source of creative inspiration.

‘Once the pieces are in place, I feel tremendous excitement at the anticipation of the upcoming battle. I love the strategy involved in the opening exchanges, the development of pieces and the fight for territorial and material advantage. I love wondering what my opponent is feeling, thinking as the middle game progresses, and hope that my tactics have been successful as the endgame plays out. It’s the level of intricacy, of army against army, mind against mind and predicting your opponents’ moves that makes chess so fascinating for me.’

...AND LETTING THE CHESS PIECES SPEAK

Sullivan points out that he always tried to keep his ‘Chess Peace’ collection so that people with just a general knowledge of chess can understand the humour. His ideas come from reading or looking into some of the names of different gambits and opening moves, using them as inspiration for making ‘Chess Peace’ as entertaining to as wide a following as possible.

‘But the greatest humour comes from bringing the characters to life, and asking



myself: What would chess pieces say and do if they really came to life? How would they interact with each other in ways we can empathise with as human beings?

This is what brings such appeal to the ‘Chess Peace’ cartoon series”, concludes Sullivan.

We hope readers will readily agree that Sullivan’s cartoons which are published alongside this article bring the pieces to life in a novel, witty and captivating way.

WIN A SIGNED CARTOON BY TONY SULLIVAN!

The first 10 readers to introduce a new subscriber to the printed version of BCM before April 2018 will each win a signed cartoon!

We also invite readers to submit chess related jokes and real life amusing or strange incidents (verifiable please!). We will publish those we like best, the first 10 readers to be published will also each win a signed cartoon!





By IM Shaun Taulbut

Photo by: King Salman World Chess Championships Official

The 'King Salman World Rapid & Blitz Championship' took place in Riyadh from 26th to 30th December, and was endowed with a record \$2 million dollar (£1.47m) prize fund: a \$750,000 prize fund for each of the Open Rapid and Blitz tournaments and \$250,000 for each of the Women's Rapid and Blitz tournaments. Each of the Opens had a first prize of \$250,000.

The massive prize fund attracted the top players including the top-rated Magnus Carlsen, classical World Champion.

However, the event was mired in controversy: Israeli players were denied visas. The official explanation was that visas could not be granted because the Saudi Arabia had no diplomatic ties with Israel.

The issue of women's rights also came up: Anna Muzychuk (who won the 2016 world rapid and blitz championships) said that 'despite the record prize fund, I am not going to play in Riyadh' even if that meant losing her two world championship titles. FIDE announced in November that the tournament's organisers had agreed there would be 'no need for female players to wear a hijab or abaya during the games', but Muzychuk did not want to back down. Some other top names of the chess scene voiced their anger in November when it was confirmed that the world rapid and blitz championships were to be held in Saudi Arabia. Hikaru Nakamura then said: 'To organize a chess tournament in a country where basic human rights aren't valued is horrible'.

OPEN RAPID

In spite of the controversy, some of the strongest names appeared, including the World No 1.

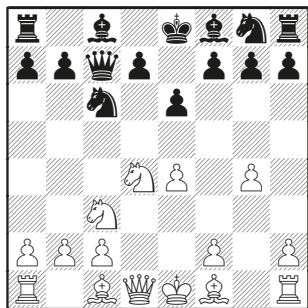
Magnus Carlsen started slowly but came to the fore in the middle of the tournament and before the last round was joint leader with Vishy Anand on 10/14; in a dramatic last round Carlsen lost to Grischuk, Anand drew quickly with Bu Xiangzhi to reach 10.5/15 and was joined on that score by Fedoseev and Nepomniachtchi. There was a play-off between Anand and Fedoseev to decide the championship which was won by Anand. David Howell scored 8/15 and Nigel Short 7/15.

Here are some of the most interesting games from the Rapid.

Magnus Carlsen - Rustam Kasimdzhanov

World Rapid 2017, Riyadh

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6
5.♗c3 ♖c7 6.g4



A type of Keres attack aiming to kick the black knight if it comes to f6 so Black waits and develops his queen's knight.

6...a6 7.h4 b5 8.♗xc6 dxc6 8...♖xc6
9.♗g2 is also playable for Black.

9.♖f3 Preparing to castle queenside is White's active plan here.

9...e5 10.g5 ♗e6 11.♗h3 White exchanges the light-squared bishops, hoping to make progress on the kingside.

11...♗xh3 12.♖xh3 ♗c5 13.♗d2 0-0-0
Black castles into relative safety this side.

14.0-0-0 f6 15.h5 fxg5 16.♗xg5 ♖xd1+
17.♗xd1 ♖d7 18.♖b3 ♗f6 19.♗d3 ♖g4
20.♗e3 This surprising retreat is White's best, planning to invade with the queen if possible.

20...♗xe3+ Maybe better is 20...♗d4
21.♖a3 ♗b7 22.♖e7+ ♖d7 23.♖xd7+
♗xd7 24.♗xd4 exd4 25.♖xd4 ♗c7 when
Black has drawing chances.

Not 20...♗xe4 when 21.f3 ♗xe3+ 22.♗xe3
♖xf3 23.♖e6+ ♗b8 24.♖xc6 is winning.

21.♗xe3 ♖xe4 21...♖g1+ 22.♖d1 ♖xf2
23.h6 is difficult to meet as in the game.

22.♖e6+ ♗b8 23.h6 The key thrust,
undermining the black knight.

23...♖h1+ After 23...♖e8 24.♖d6+ ♗b7
25.hxg7 ♖h1+ 26.♖d1 ♖h6 27.♖g1 ♖h2
28.g8 ♖xg8 29.♖xg8 ♗xg8 30.♖d7+
♗b6 31.♖d8+ ♗b7 32.♖xg8 with a
decisive advantage.

24.♖d1 ♖xh6 25.♖xc6 Black resigned as
many moves are met by ♖d6 or simply ♖xa6
1-0

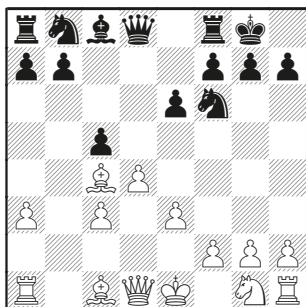
**THE ISSUE OF
WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ALSO CAME UP:
ANNA MUZYCHUK
(WHO WON THE 2016
WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ
CHAMPIONSHIPS)
SAID THAT 'DESPITE THE
RECORD PRIZE FUND,
I AM NOT GOING TO
PLAY IN RIYADH'**

Magnus Carlsen - Viswanathan Anand

World Rapid 2017

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 The trusty Nimzo-Indian.

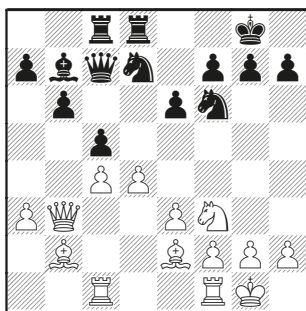
4.e3 0-0 5.♘d3 d5 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.♙xc4 c5



Black has given up the two bishops - a standard feature of the Nimzo-Indian, and in this line White does not have doubled pawns.

9.♘f3 ♖c7 10.♙e2 b6 Planning the play on the light squares with ...♙b7.

11.♙b2 ♙b7 12.0-0 ♘bd7 13.c4 ♖ac8 14.♖c1 ♖fd8 15.♖b3



15...♘g4 A direct attack which forces a weakness in the white position.

16.g3 ♘gf6 17.♖fd1 ♘e4 18.♘e1 ♘d6



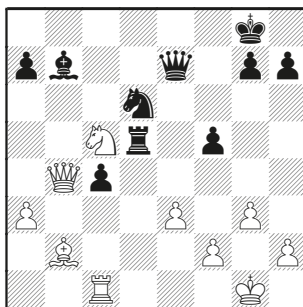
After winning the Rapid, Anand tweeted: 'Mildly put, I am very pleased with my play! Happy 2018.'

19.d5 exd5 20.cxd5 c4 21.♖c2 b5 White still has an edge with the bishop pair but Black should be able to hold.

22.♘g2 ♘c5 23.♘f4 ♖e7 24.♙g4 ♖c7 25.♖c3 f5 26.♙f3 ♖cd7 27.♖b4 ♘b3 28.♘e6 ♘xc1 29.♖xc1 ♘c8 Black attacks the pawn on d5, the linchpin of White's position.

30.♖xb5 The alternatives were 30.♙xg7 ♖xb4 31.axb4 ♙xd5 32.♙xd5 ♖xd5 33.♘xd8 ♖xd8 34.♙d4 ♘e7 35.♙xa7 ♘c6 36.♙c5 ♖d2 and Black has a satisfactory position despite being a pawn down; or 30.♘xd8 ♖xb4 31.axb4 ♖xd8 32.♖d1 ♘b6 33.♙d4 ♘xd5 34.♙xa7 ♖d7 35.♙c5 ♘f7 36.♙f1 g6 and Black has a small edge.

30...♖xd5 31.♙xd5 ♖xd5 32.♖b4 ♘d6 33.♘c5



33.♘f4 ♖b5 34.♚c3 is best; this move is a blunder.

33...♖xc5 34.♚xc5 ♚e4

For if 35.♙f1 ♚h1+ 36.♙e2 ♙f3+ 37.♙d2 ♙e4+ 38.♙c2 ♚xc1+ 39.♙xc1 ♙xc5 wins a piece and the game.

0-1

Vladimir Fedoseev – Vladislav Artemiev

World Rapid 2017, Riyadh

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♚c7 7.♚d3 White plays his queen out with a novel idea.

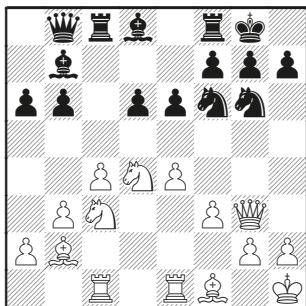
7...b6 8.♚g3 Offering the queen exchange.

8...d6 If 8...♙d6 9.♚xg7 ♖g8 10.♚xf6 ♙e5 11.♘xe6 dxe6 12.♚h4 White is much better; 8...♚xg3 9.hxg3 ♙b4 10.f3 d6 11.g4 is slightly better for White.

9.♙d3 ♙b7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♖e1 ♘e5 12.♙f1 ♙e7 12...♘xc4 is critical when after 13.♙g5 b5 14.b3 ♘e5 15.♖ac1 ♚b6 16.♙e3 ♚d8 17.f4 White has play for the pawn.

13.b3 After 13.♚xg7 ♖g8 14.♚h6 ♘eg4 15.♚h3 ♚c5 16.♙e3 ♘xe3 17.fxe3 White is slightly better.

13...0-0 14.♙b2 ♘g6 15.♖ac1 ♖ac8 16.♙h1 ♚b8 17.f3 ♙d8



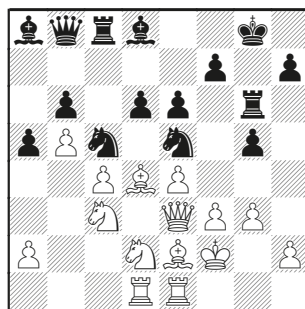
THE EVENT WAS MIRED IN CONTROVERSY: ISRAELI PLAYERS WERE DENIED VISAS. THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION WAS THAT VISAS COULD NOT BE GRANTED BECAUSE THE SAUDI ARABIA HAD NO DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL

A typical Hedgehog position with equality.

18.♚f2 ♖c5 19.b4 ♖h5 Black swings his rook over to attack the white king so White has to defend carefully.

20.g3 ♙c7 21.♙g1 ♘e5 22.♙e2 ♖h6 23.b5 a5 24.♖cd1 g5 A useful plan.

25.♙c1 ♖g6 26.♙e3 ♖c8 27.♘b3 ♙a8 28.♙d4 ♘fd7 29.♚e3 ♙d8 30.♘d2 ♘c5 31.♙f2



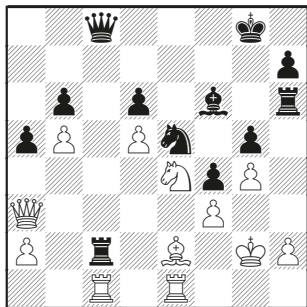
White removes his king from the g-file but Black is at least equal now.

31...f5 31...♚c7 is good.

32.exf5 exf5 33.♘d5 ♙xd5 34.cxd5 f4 35.♚a3 ♙f6 35...♖h6 36.♙g2 ♙f6 is good.

36.♙xc5 ♖xc5 37.♘e4 ♖h6 38.♙g2 38.♘xc5 is good enough eg 38...♖xh2+ 39.♙g1 fxg3 40.♘e4 ♚f8 41.♚xd6 wins.

38...♖c8 39.g4 ♖c2 40.♖c1



40...♗xg4 40...♗e7 is equal.

41.fxg4 ♖xe2+ 41...♗xg4+ 42.♖f1 ♖xe2 43.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 44.♖xe2 is winning for White.

42.♖xe2 ♗xg4+ 43.♖f1 ♗d4 44.♖g2 ♗h4 45.♗xg5 ♖f8 46.♗d3 ♗e5 47.♗f5+ ♖f6 48.♗xh7+

1-0

WOMEN'S RAPID & BLITZ

The women's Rapid was won by Ju Wenjun of China with 11.5/15 followed by Lei Tingjie of China on 11/15 and Elisabeth Paecht of Germany on 10.5/15.

The Blitz tournament for women was won by Nana Dzagnidze of Georgia with 16.5/21, followed by Valentina Gunina of Russia with 16/21.

OPEN BLITZ

Magnus Carlsen won the Open Blitz with 16/21, followed by Sergei Karjakin and Vishy Anand on 14.5/21. David Howell scored 11/21, Nigel Short and Luke McShane scored 10/21. Here is one of the decisive games in terms of the destination of first prize,

Magnus Carlsen – Sergey Karjakin

World Blitz 2017 Riyadh KSA (15.1)

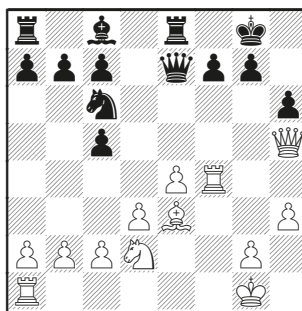
1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 ♗f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.♗xc6 dxc6 6.♗c3 0-0 7.♗e3 After 7.♗xe5 ♗d4 8.♗e3 ♗xe5 9.d4 ♗e7 10.dxc5 ♗xe4 Black has a slight edge.

7...♗d6 7...♗e3 8.fxe3 ♗e7 9.♗e2 b5, meaning that White cannot easily castle queenside, looks best here.

8.♗g5 ♖e8 8...♗e7 looks good here followed quickly by ...h6.

9.h3 c5 10.♗d5 ♗e7 11.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 12.0-0 h6 13.♗e3 ♗d7 13...c4 is logical here since 14.dxc4 ♗xe4 is good for Black.

14.♗d2 ♗b8 15.f4 exf4 16.♖xf4 ♗c6 17.♗h5



White prepares a kingside attack and Black has few defending pieces.

17...b6 18.♖af1 ♖f8 After 18...♗e6 19.♖h4 f6 20.♗xh6 gxh6 21.♗xh6 ♗g7 22.♖xf6 ♗xh6 23.♖hx6 ♗d8 24.♖hg6+ ♗h8 25.♗f3 White is better.

19.♟f3 19.♞f3 ♞e5 20.♞g3 ♞g6 21.♟xh6 gxf6 22.♞xh6, with a big advantage to White, is best.

19...♟e6 19...g5 is best; after 20.♞h4 gxf4 21.♟xh6 ♞d7 22.♞g5 f6 23.♞g6+ ♟h8 24.♞h5 and now not 24...fxg5 (24...♟g8 25.♞g6+ with a draw) 25.♟xf8+ ♞h7 26.♟g7+ ♟xg7 27.♞f7+.

23.♟xh6 ♞xc2 24.♞e5 fxe5 On 24...♞e7 25.♞g6 ♞f7 26.♟d2 wins.

25.♞xf7 ♞xf7 26.♞g6 ♟xa2 After 26...♞d4 27.♟g5 ♞d7 28.♞h7 ♞e2+ 29.♟f2 ♞f4 30.♟xf4 wins.

27.♟g5 ♞ff8 28.♞h7 ♞f7 29.♟f6 Black cannot stop mate.

20.♞h4 f6 21.♞g6 ♞f7 22.♞g3 ♞b4

1-0

RAPID									
Rk.	Sno	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts..	TB1	TB2	TB3	Rp
1	12	GM Anand Viswanathan	IND	2758	10.5	0	2733	129	2874
2	8	GM Fedoseev Vladimir	RUS	2771	10.5	0	2728	129.5	2871
3	7	GM Nepomniachtchi Ian	RUS	2780	10.5	0	2700	121.5	2843
4	68	GM Bu Xiangzhi	CHN	2654	10	0	2746	130.5	2867
5	1	GM Carlsen Magnus	NOR	2908	10	0	2712	129	2823
6	5	GM Grischuk Alexander	RUS	2813	10	0	2709	124	2827
7	45	GM Savchenko Boris	RUS	2685	10	0	2686	123	2786
8	37	GM Mamedov Rauf	AZE	2695	10	0	2652	120	2753
9	26	GM Guseinov Gadir	AZE	2714	10	0	2648	111	2754
10	18	GM Svidler Peter	RUS	2743	9.5	0	2729	129.5	2805
11	9	GM Wang Hao	CHN	2770	9.5	0	2726	126.5	2814
12	14	GM Yu Yangyi	CHN	2752	9.5	0	2694	120	2778
BLITZ									
Rk.	Sno	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts..	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4
1	1	GM Carlsen Magnus	NOR	2986	16.0	0.0	2742	257.0	10
2	3	GM Karjakin Sergey	RUS	2854	14.5	0.5	2745	253.0	11
3	20	GM Anand Viswanathan	IND	2736	14.5	0.5	2712	245.5	11
4	19	GM Wang Hao	CHN	2737	14.0	0.0	2716	249.5	11
5	2	GM Aronian Levon	ARM	2863	14.0	0.0	2685	239.5	10
6	5	GM Ding Liren	CHN	2837	13.5	0.0	2722	251.5	10
7	23	GM Petrosian Tigran L.	ARM	2705	13.5	0.0	2710	251.0	10
8	25	GM Yu Yangyi	CHN	2701	13.5	0.0	2708	251.0	10
9	13	GM Korobov Anton	UKR	2760	13.5	0.0	2707	248.5	10
10	12	GM Mamedyarov Shakhriyar	AZE	2770	13.5	0.0	2697	242.5	10
11	9	GM Svidler Peter	RUS	2797	13.5	0.0	2692	247.0	10
12	4	GM Vachier-Lagrave Maxime	FRA	2853	13.0	0.0	2747	264.0	10

Openings for Amateurs

Hugh Alexander was a great British player and his games should not be forgotten

C.H.O'D. ALEXANDER VERSUS THE OLD SCHEVENINGEN

by Pete Tamburro, ptamburro@aol.com

I look for instructional ‘model games’ for my chess students because they will learn all sorts of concepts. I put 53 of them in my book ‘Openings for Amateurs’. I look for games that take the opening ideas into the middle game in a way that not only shows the link between those two phases of the game, but because so often young players get 10 or even 15 moves into the game, run out of their memorized line and have no idea how to continue.

The opening theory of this game is now old stuff, but Alexander’s planning and execution of the attack is an eye-opening experience to a student who hasn’t seen it. The two related games in the notes supplement the discussion, and it becomes a feast of ideas. We don’t do modern opening theory regarding the Scheveningen. That comes in a later lesson, but we do talk about the ideas involved in the initial moves. It’s a sophisticated opening. That’s why I start them with the c3 Sicilian!

Enjoy the bounty of ideas in this game and in the notes. Hugh Alexander was a great British player and his games should not be forgotten.

**Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander -
Laszlo Szabo**

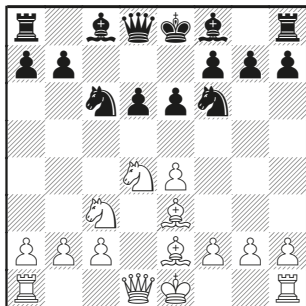
Hilversum zt Hilversum (7), 22.07.1947

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 There is, of course, 2... d6 If you’re not afraid of the Keres Attack with 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.g4 (Soltis, who had no fear of the Keres line, also demonstrated how move order can affect a variation as, after 6.♘e2 ♘e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘e3 ♘c6 9.f4 , we see a distinct difference between our game continuation and this variation. Black has castled first, not committed his queen to a square nor decentralised his knight, and Soltis now recommended 9...e5!? 10.♘b3 exf4. This is a completely different sort of game, but very typical of the uncompromising struggles brought about in the modern Sicilian.)

3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 Another path is 4... e6. Najdorf, in the 2nd Piatagorsky Cup book, wrote, ‘A sound system which allows Black to use the Scheveningen plan of defence, delaying the development of his KN to avoid

early attacks based on g4. One aspect that requires attention is the possibility of the first player taking possession of the centre with c4, but actual practice shows the good prospects for counterplay that Black retains. Another possibility that offers no risk is the alternative 5.♘b5, selected by Fischer against me in the 16th round.'

5.♘c3 d6 6.♙e2 e6 7.♙e3



In case you don't have a copy of the December, 1947, BCM lying about, here is the comment after White's 7th move: 'This rather routine move is probably not best. If White is going for a Kingside advance he may as well play at once 7.Castles, 8.♖h1, 9.f4, but an even better plan is 7.Castles ♖c7 8.b3! followed by ♙b2 and ♗d2, after which it is difficult for Black to get much play on the Queenside and White has a very good position on both sides of the board' - Alexander, who was the Games Editor at the time.

Emanuel Lasker against V. Pirc at Moscow in 1935 went this way, only to end up at our game position after move nine, and then went a different way: 7.0-0 a6 8.♙e3 ♗c7 9.f4 ♘a5.

7...♗c7 It is possible for Black to play 7...e5 here, but players of the Black pieces have much better e5 systems from which to choose.

8.f4 a6 9.0-0 ♘a5 This is what we referred to in the note to move two. It is worth looking at the two positions side by side. However, as with the same manoeuvre in the Dragon, the ♘a5-c4 excursion to chase a bishop had in past

years often been represented as sophisticated positional play. This game cast some doubts on that. Black abandoned this decentralisation in favour of keeping the knight on c6, getting the bishops developed and playing b5 and, as noted above, e5 at the right moment to play exf4 and give that black knight a much nicer square than a5 on e5. White adapted, too, and started playing a4 to discourage b5 and yet keeping moves like ♗e1 and ♖h1. Other players opted for a setup with ♘b3, ♙f3 and, at some point, g4.

10.♖h1 A not so mysterious king move. Just as ♖b1 is often played in queenside castling to avoid checks and protect a2, the kingside manoeuvre is there to avoid a possible pin of the ♘d4 or awkward check along the a7-g1 diagonal as well as provide White an option to play ♙g1.

The great Lasker gave students of the game a miniature lesson with 10.f5 ♘c4 'An excess of consistency.' -Tartakower. 11.♙xc4 ♗xc4 12.fxe6 fxe6? 13.♗xf6! gxf6 14.♗h5+ ♖d8 15.♗f7 ♙d7 16.♗xf6+ ♖c7 17.♗xh8 ♙h6 18.♘xe6+! (18.♗xa8 ♙xe3+ 19.♖h1 ♙xd4) 18...♗xc6 19.♗xa8 ♙xe3+ 20.♖h1 1-0.

10...♙e7 11.♗e1 Alexander offered a fine summary of why this move was so important: 'A strong move, serving several purposes: (1) it protects the Knight, permitting b3; (2) there is a masked attack on the knight on a5; (3) the Queen can come out on g3 for the K-side attack; (4) it threatens e5 in some variations; (5) it threatens Rd1 after which Black's ♘c4 can be met by ♙c1 and b3 without any inconvenience to White.'

11...♘c4 Also possible were 11...0-0 and; 11...b5.

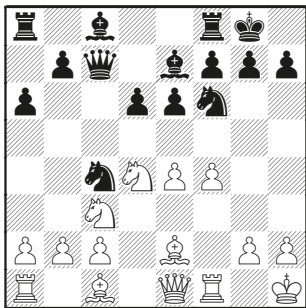
12.♙c1 Almost 60 years later, Milan Andrijevic demonstrated another way - coming right down the middle of the board - against Ljubisa Kerecki at Belgrade with 12.♙xc4 ♗xc4 13.e5 ♘g4 14.♙g1.

A) 14...dxe5 15.fxe5 ♗c7 16.♗g3 h5 17.♗ae1 0-0 18.h3 ♘h6 19.♙e3 h4 20.♗f3

f5 21.exf6 (21.♙xh6 gxh6 22.g4 hxg3 23.♙xg3+ ♖h8 24.♙g1 ♙b4) 21...♙xf6 22.♙xh6 gxh6 23.♗e4 ♙g7 24.♙g4 ♙e7 25.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 26.♗xe6 ♙xe6 27.♙xe6+ ♙f7 28.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 29.♗d6+;

B) 14...h5 15.♗f5 ♙c7 16.♗d5 exd5 17.exd6 ♙d7 18.♗xe7 ♖f8 19.♗xd5 ♙xd6 20.♙d1 1-0.

12...0-0



In the next year, Lajos Steiner as Black against Isaak Boleslavsky at the Interzonal felt he had an equalising line: 12...b5 13.b3 ♗b6. 14. ♙f3

Steiner should have read BCM back then as Alexander gave detailed notes at this point, but suggested Black should be wary of 14.e5 dxe5 [14...b4 15.♙f3 bxc3 16.♙xa8 ♗xa8 17.exf6 ♙xf6 18.♗f5 0-0 19.♗g3] 15.fxe5 ♙xe5 16.♗dxb5 [Actually, right away is best: 16.♙xb5+] 16...axb5 17.♙xb5+ But Boleslavsky had his own ideas.)

14...♙b7 15.a3 ♗bd7 16.♙b2 ♗c5? (Sicilian players often receive kudos for not castling so as to energeise their counterplay with other piece or pawn thrusts. Boleslavsky is more energetic with Black's uncastled king. 16...0-0 was indicated so Black could follow with ♙d8 or ♙e8 and ♙f8, setting up a typical Sicilian castled defence.)

17.b4 ♗cd7 18.e5! dxe5 19.fxe5 ♗g8? (A humiliating and fatal retreat. Although he would still be worse, he wouldn't be disastrous with 19...♙xf3 20.exf6 ♙xg2+ 21.♖xg2 ♗xf6 22.♙g3 ♙d6 23.♙h4)

20.♙g3 ♙f8 21.♙ae1 ♗h6 22.♙xb7 ♙xb7 23.♙c1 g6 24.♙xh6 ♙xh6 25.♙h3 ♙g5 26.♗e4 ♙e7 27.♙xf7! ♙d5 28.♙xe7+! ♖xe7 29.♙h4+ ♖f7 30.♗d6+ ♖g7 31.♙e7+ ♖h6 32.♙e3 and the trusty rook lift brought Black's resignation.

13.b3 ♗a5 No annotator I could find suggested 13...e5, yet the concept of this move is so much a part of modern play that you find low-rated players eager to essay this thrust. When you think about how many games you see with this move at any point in a Sicilian, it ably demonstrates the evolution of chess ideas even among the amateurs. Of course, 13...e5 is not a simple path: 14.♗db5! axb5 15.♗xb5 ♙c6 16.♙xc4 ♗xe4 17.fxe5 dxe5 18.♙b2 ♙e6 19.♙d3 ♗c5 20.♙xe5 f6 21.♙g3 ♗xd3 22.♗d4 ♙a6 23.♗xe6 ♙xe6 24.♙xd3 ♙fd8 makes more of a fight of it than the move chosen in the game, but White is still a pawn up for which Black's piece activity does not fully compensate.

14.♙d3 ♗d7 Some chess writer once said that there were only bad moves in bad positions.

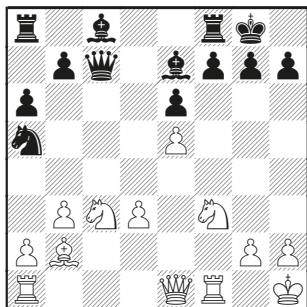
For example, 14...♙d7 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 ♗g4 17.♙f4 ♗c6 18.♗xc6 ♙xc6 19.♙g3 h5 20.♗e4; 14...d5 15.e5 ♗d7 16.♗f5 ♙d8 (16...exf5 17.♗xd5 ♙d8 18.♗xe7+ ♙xe7 19.♙xa5) 17.♗xg7 ♖xg7 18.♙g3+ ♖h8 19.♙xh7 ♖xh7 20.♙h3+ ♖g8 21.♙g4+ ♖h7 22.♙f3; 14...♗c6 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.e5 ♗d5 17.♗xd5 cxd5 18.♙b2 dxe5 19.♙xe5 ♙c5 20.♙f3.

15.♙b2 ♙f6 Black is fighting hard against the threat of e5 with four of his men hitting that square; however, the advance of e5 is not to establish a post on e5. It is a multi-purpose threat: open the diagonal for the bishops on both b2 and d3, vacate e4 for the knight and open the f-file for the rook.

16.♗f3! Repositioning the knight is excellent. Why allow exchanges when you have an advantage in space? Black is now worried about the dangerous bishop about to be given a wider field of fire from d3, so he moves to eliminate it. If Black tried to recentralise the knight, e5 and ♗e4 would

be ‘exceedingly strong’. (Alexander).

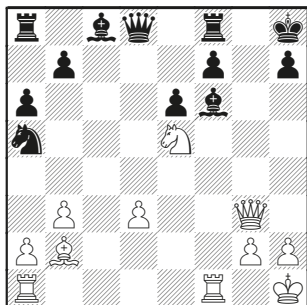
16...♖c5 17.e5 ♜xd3 18.cxd3 dxe5 19.fxe5
♙e7



And now the entire difficulty of Black’s chosen plan is revealed. He has a useless knight on the rim. He has no knight for defence of the kingside castled position and White’s ability to play ♖e4 and ♜f6, with that dangerous bishop backing all that up on b2, is decisive. Even the semi-open f-file for the rook and the queen from its e1 square will later make grand entrances to usurp the throne.

20.♖e4 ♜d8 20...f5 21.exf6 ♙xf6
(Alexander noted that after 21...gxf6
22.♙e5 fxe5 23.♜g3+ ♜h8 24.♜xe5
White wins.) 22.♜xf6+ gxf6 23.♜g5! fxg5
24.♜xf8+ ♜xf8 25.♜b4+ ♜e8 26.♜f1.
21.♜f6+

21...gxf6 22.♜g3+ ♜h8 23.exf6 ♙xf6
24.♜e5!



THE OPENING THEORY OF THIS GAME IS NOW OLD STUFF, BUT ALEXANDER'S PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE ATTACK IS AN EYE- OPENING EXPERIENCE

This move deserves an exclamation mark because it’s the only move that wins. Students will often have some difficulty finding it.

The valuable lesson with ♜e5 is that quite often ♜g5 is the choice of the student, assuming Black will cooperate in some sort of sui-mate. Instead, Black’s replies of either 25...♙xa1 or 25...♜f6 often are quite unexpected. This reminds them that they should always take into account that their opponents will come up with all sorts of unanticipated ways to rebuff your attack. 24.♜g5 ♙xb2 25.♜xf7 ♙xa1 (25...♜f6 26.♜xf6 ♙xf6 27.♜f1 ♙d7) 26.♜h3 ♜xf7 27.♜xf7+ ♜g8 28.♜xd8 ♜c6.

24...♙xe5 25.♙xe5+ f6 26.♜xf6

1-0

A final question for students is ‘Why did Black resign?’

Of course, after ♜xf6, ♜f1 by White brings the last white piece into play, and the curtain goes down on f6. If you have been following in recent months in BCM, you know I teach the Accelerated Dragon because its themes are easier to understand. The Scheveningen’s difficulty was characterised very well by GM Andy Soltis in his booklet on the opening: ‘either side has a choice of several different good-looking moves at just about every point in the opening; and the difference between a good-looking move and the right move is what makes an advantage in the Sicilian.’ Nevertheless, a fair number of people are attracted by this. Every teacher, though, should make them aware of a little ancient history.



By Theo Slade

In this article I would like to show that, although a back-rank checkmate is one of the first motifs we learn in chess, it has many implications. Although back-rank mates most often occur in low-level games, this is an important motif that often hangs in the shadow of the games of top players.

In the featured game, which was played almost a hundred years ago, we will see a long and beautiful combination by White, all the time highlighting Black's weakness on the back rank. When the sequence begins, the position looks innocuous, but, as we will learn, you should always be on the lookout for potential back-rank weaknesses, even when there seem to be no problems!

Edwin Ziegler Adams – Refetto Carlos Torre

New Orleans, 1920

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 exd4 This way of playing for Black is a little passive as his dark-squared bishop is blocked in and White can establish a powerful piece on d4 once he recaptures.

4.♙xd4 This move seems to break the opening principle of avoiding moving your queen to an exposed post. On the other hand, it kind of develops a piece.

In a way, you could say that White has avoided moving the same piece twice in the opening with 4.♘xd4.

4...♗c6 This is obviously the downside of 4.♙xd4, but White does not have to waste any tempi.

5.♕b5 pins the c6-knight.

5...♗d7 Unfortunately, to avoid loss of tempo, White must part with his bishop pair, but after **6.♗xc6 ♗xc6** both of Black's bishops will find it hard to become strong.

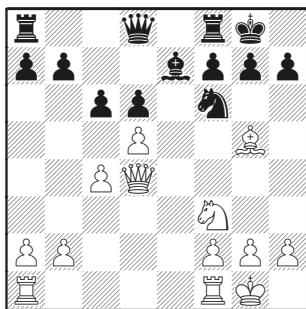
7.♗c3 ♗f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♗d5 I like this move in these structures. White is aiming to gain space by luring Black into exchanging off White's most powerful piece.

9...♗xd5 The pesky d5-knight could not be tolerated.

10.exd5 0-0 Now that the pawn structure is symmetrical, White's space advantage is more telling. Even though Black only has two minor pieces, his bishop has no moves!

11.♗g5 c6 Understandably, Black seeks to free his position with a pawn break.

12.c4?!



However, White responds suboptimally.

It is already time for a transformation of advantages! 12.dxc6 bxc6: Black's isolated a7-pawn and hanging c6 and d6-pawns are weaker than they may appear at first sight. White's queen is already eyeing the a7- and d6-pawns, and he can quickly increase the pressure with ♖ad1 and ♔a4. 13.♔a4 h6 14.♕h4 ♔d7 15.♖ad1 ♖a8 16.♗fe1 White retains an edge due to his superior pawn structure and his more active pieces.

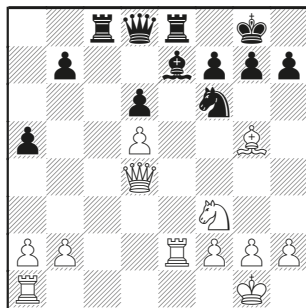
12...cxd5 12...♗xd5 was also possible, but it was no better than the game. 13.cxd5 ♕xg5 14.♗xg5 ♔xg5 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.♔xd6 White restores material equality. 16...♔b5 The position is equal because Black's isolated pawns and White's exposed queen cancel each other out.

**WHEN THE
SEQUENCE BEGINS,
THE POSITION LOOKS
INNOCUOUS,
BUT AS WE WILL LEARN, YOU
SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON THE
LOOKOUT FOR POTENTIAL
BACK RANK WEAKNESSES,
EVEN WHEN THERE
SEEM TO BE
NO PROBLEMS!**

13.cxd5 ♖e8 14.♗fe1 Black wants to activate his a8-rook but at the moment it is defending the a7-pawn, so he moves his a-pawn out of the way.

14...a5 15.♖e2 White prepares to double his rooks on the open e-file.

15...♖c8??

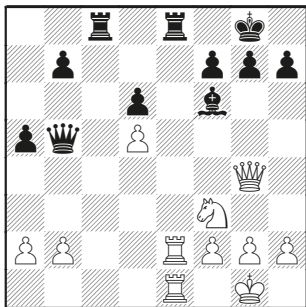


White is already winning here! The key is Black's back-rank weakness, which sounds ridiculous when Black has three major pieces defending the back rank right now, but that is why I am showing this game!

15...h6 was better. Michael Adams said that h3, a3, ...a6, and ...h6 are generally useful moves, and it makes sense why. In this case, Black puts the question to White's bishop, whilst creating a 'luft' for the king on g8. Another more abstract advantage is that with pawns on f7, g7, and h7, for example, g6 is covered twice (unnecessarily). However, after ...h6, g6 and g5 are both covered once, so I think that is a more efficient use of those pawns. Of course, you also have to be careful that the h6-pawn does not become a hook for White after g4-g5, but, in this position, that is not an issue. 16.♕d2 ♔d7 After 12.c4?!, Black has equalised.

16.♖ae1 ♔d7 17.♕xf6 The start of a long combination.

17...♕xf6 18.♔g4!! Black's queen is defending e8, so **18...♔b5** is the toughest defensive move.



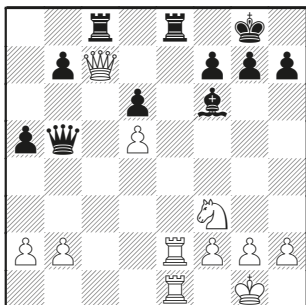
The queen is immune from capture:
18...♖xc4 19.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20.♖xe8♯

19.♖c4!! For the second consecutive move, White puts his queen en prise on an unoccupied square, only this time Black has two pieces that could take it!

19...♗d7 Naturally, if Black were to actually take White's queen, he would be immediately mated on the back rank: 19...♖xc4 20.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21.♖xe8♯; 19...♖xc4 20.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 21.♖xe8♯.

20.♖c7!! Same idea again!

20...♖b5



20...♖xc7 21.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 22.♖xe8♯;
20...♗xc7 21.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22.♖xe8♯

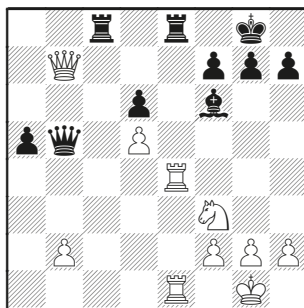
21.a4 But how does this help after Black's next?

Now White must be a bit more (!) creative. 21.♖xb7?? does not work because - guess what - White also has a back rank weakness! 21...♖xe2 gives White a taste of his own medicine. 22.♖xe2 (22.♖xc8 ♖xe1+ 23.♗xe1 ♖xc8+) 22...♖c1+ 23.♖e1 (23.♗e1 ♖xe1+ 24.♖xe1 ♖xe1♯) 23...♖xc1+ 24.♗xe1 ♖xe1♯.

21...♖xa4 22.♖e4 Excellent! Shower the board with golden coins! The point is that after **22...♖b5**

22...♖xe4 23.♖xc8+ ♗d8 24.♖xd8+ ♗e8 (24...♖e8 25.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 26.♖xe8♯) 25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.♖xe8♯; 22...♖xe4 23.♖xe4 ♖xe4 (23...♖xc7 24.♖xe8♯) 24.♖xc8+ ♗d8 25.♖xd8+ ♖e8 26.♖xe8♯; If Black creates a loophole for his king now with 22...h6, then it is too little too late after 23.♖xc8 ♖xc8 (23...♖xe4 24.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 25.♖xe8+-) 24.♖xa4+-

23.♖xb7



This works now because there is no ... ♖xe2 saving grace.

Black is in a problem which he can't get out of. 23.♖xb7 ♖a4 24.♖xa4+-

1-0

I hope you enjoyed this game! Please note that this should not be an excuse to play an, 'I don't know what to do move' (a3, h3, ...a6, or ...h6), but just a reminder to think prophylactically when it comes to the weakness of the back rank.

QUOTES AND QUERIES

HASTINGS VIA BROOKLYN AND WIESBADEN

By Alan Smith

6111 The Hastings chess tournament is the most venerable on the calendar. The first edition, Hastings 1895, was a stellar affair featuring almost all of the leading players of the day. The field of twenty-two battled it out over twenty-nine days. Tarrasch fell behind the pace in the first week, while Steinitz lost four games in a row in the second week.

Once von Bardeleben's challenge had imploded, it was left to Chigorin, Lasker and Pillsbury to battle for top honours.

The three were tied for first place with four rounds to play. Pillsbury lost to Schlechter, but then won three in a row to take first prize, while Chigorin and Lasker both faltered in the last three rounds. Meanwhile Tarrasch won six in a row to complete a fine recovery, just pipping Steinitz for the fourth prize. None of the fifteen games between the top six finishers was drawn.

Pillsbury's success did not come out of the blue. He had won a strong New York tournament in December 1893 and won all four games on board 1 for the Brooklyn Chess Club, in the inaugural Metropolitan League season.

Harry Nelson Pillsbury –
Jean Taubenhaus

Brooklyn – Metropolitan, 1895

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7
5.♘f3 0–0 6.e3 b6 7.♖c1 ♙b7 8.♙xf6
Pillsbury preferred 8.cxd5 against Amos
Burn at Hastings.

8...♙xf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙d3 c5 11.0–0 cxd4

This avoids 11...c4 12.♙b1 ♘d7 13.♘d2
♙e8 14.♙f3! and White wins a key pawn:
Blackburne - Zukertort Frankfurt 1887.

12.♘xd4 ♙xd4 13.exd4 ♘d7 14.♙e1 ♘f6
15.♙f3 ♙c8 16.♙e5 ♘e4 17.♙ce1 ♘xc3
18.bxc3 g6 19.♙c2 ♙c7 20.♙1e3 ♙cd8
21.h4 ♙d6

Black could not have tried 21...h5 because
of the response 22.♙xh5! gxh5 23.♙f5!
and mate follows 23...f6 24.♙g3+ ♙xg3
25.♙h7♯.

22.h5 ♙d8 23.♙e7 The exchanges have
not helped the plight of Black's bishop.

23...♗c8 24.h6 ♖e6?! Black is completely tied down and takes his only try to break out.

25.♖3xe6 fxe6 25...♗xe6? 26.♞f6

26.♞g7+ ♗h8 27.♞f7! ♖e8 27...♗g8 is no better **28.♗xg6! hxg6 29.h7+**, nor is **27...♖e8 28.♖xh7+! ♗xh7 29.♞f7+ ♗xh6 30.♞xg6#** while **27...♖xf7 28.♞xf7** is also hopeless.

28.♞g3! e5 29.♖xh7+!

1-0

New York Times, 4th March 1895



Harry Nelson Pillsbury, Source: Wikipedia

6112 Alongside the Hastings masters tournament there was an amateur event; 32 players were divided into four sections. Géza Maróczy only tied for first place with Reverend Owen in their preliminary section, but won the playoff game. He outdistanced Loman, H. E. Atkins and Wilhelm Cohn in the final section. Overall he scored an impressive $+8 = 3$. Here is a win from round 3 of the preliminaries.

Géza Maróczy - Rev J.T.C. Chatto

Hastings Amateur, 1895

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗d7 5.f4 This is the brainchild of Wilhelm Steinitz, one of many systems he pioneered to cope with that defence. He first essayed it in the first game of his 1885 match with Alexander Sellman.

5...a6 A plausible waiting move, but **5...c5 6.dxc5 ♗c6** is better.

6.a3 c5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 7...♗xc5 is more flexible.

8.♞g4 0-0 9.♗d3 f5 10.♞h3 ♗c6 11.g4 ♗d4 Black should fight for control of f5 with **11...♗xg1! 12.♖xg1 ♗c5**.

12.♗ge2 g6 13.♗xd4 ♗xd4 14.♗e2 ♗a7 15.gxf5 exf5 16.♞g3 ♗c5 17.h4 ♗e4?

17...♗xd3+ 18.cxd3 ♗d7 intending **...♗e8** is better.

18.♗xe4! dxe4 The critical line is **18...fxe4 19.♗e3 d4 20.0-0-0 d3**.

19.h5 ♗g7 20.♗d2 ♗e6 21.0-0-0 ♞e8 22.♗b4 ♖h8 23.♞g5 ♗b6 23...♞f7 is met by **24.♗e7**.

24.hxg6 h6 24...♞xg6 is no better on account of **25.♞e7+ ♞f7 26.♖dg1+ ♗xg1+ ♗h6 28.♞g5#**, **25...♗f7** loses to **26 e6**.

25.♞f6+ ♗g8 26.♖d6 ♗e3+ 27.♗b1 ♗c4 28.♖hd1

28...♗xe2 29 ♖d7!, **28...♞f8 29.♖d7! ♞xf6 30.exf6** and the threat of **31.♞g7#** exacts a ruinous cost.

1-0

St James Budget, 18th September 1896

Géza Maróczy, Source: Wikipedia





Participants of the first Hastings tournament, 1895

6113 Horace Fabian Cheshire may not be a household name in the chess world but he was responsible for editing the tournament book of Hastings 1895. The book is unusual in that, although all the games are annotated, they are not annotated by the players themselves, but by the other contestants.

Cheshire was club champion four times and won the Sussex Championship in 1896 and 1903. The following game was played against a strong amateur player on the club's German tour in August 1903.

Horace Fabian Cheshire - Dr Carl Hartlaub

Hastings – Wiesbaden, 1903

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 a6
5.♙e3 ♗f6 6.♗c3 ♙b4 7.♙d3 b5
7...d5 is a better try.

8.♗de2 ♙b7 9.0-0 ♙xc3 10.♗xc3 b4

11.♗a4 ♗c6 Black doubtless intended 11...♗xe4? but only here saw that it is met by 12.♙g4! ♗f6 13.♙xb4 when black is troubled by dark-square weaknesses. 13...♙c7 14.♗b6!

12.♙e2 a5 13.♖ad1 ♗e5 14.♗c5 ♙c6 15.♙b5 ♙xb5 16.♙xb5 ♗fg4 17.♗b7 ♙f6 18.♙d4 ♗f3+?! 19.gxf3 ♙f4 Looking for a draw by perpetual check, but Cheshire has an emphatic rejoinder.

20.♙xd7+! ♖xd7 20...♖f8 21.♙c5+ ♖g8 22.♙d8+ with mate next move.

21.♙e5+ ♖e7 22.♙xf4 ♗f6 23.♙d6+ ♖e8 24.♙c5 ♗d7 25.♗d6+ ♖f8 26.♙e3 f6 27.♗f7 ♖xf7 28.♖xd7+ ♖g6 29.♖h1...

Black is losing more material.

1-0

Hastings and St Leonards Observer, 22nd August 1903

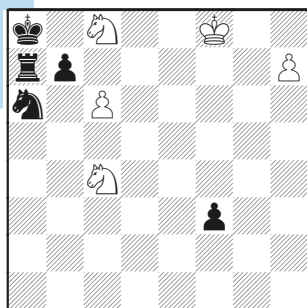
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

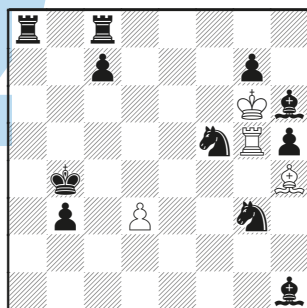
Solutions are given on page 830



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 9

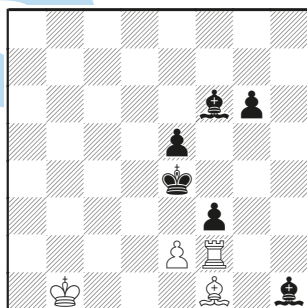
ORIGINAL



Rolf Wiehagen (Germany)
and Christer Jonsson (Sweden)

Helpmate in 2 (b) bKb8

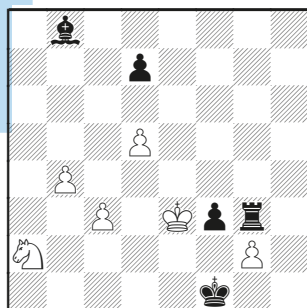
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Christopher Jones (Bristol)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL



Mihaiu Cioflanca (Romania)

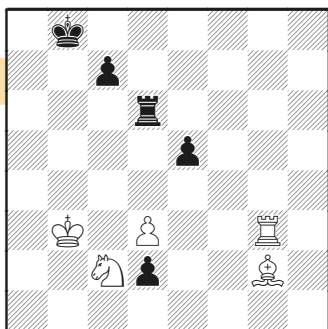
Helpmate in 4 - 2 solutions

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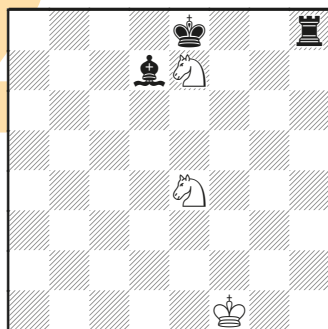
Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

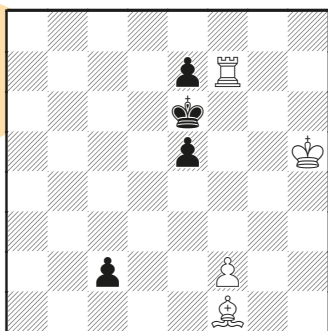
ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk



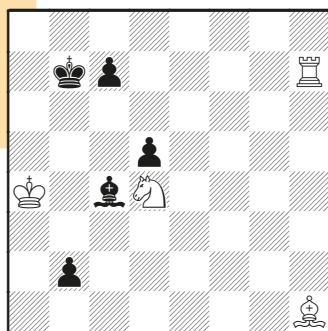
L. Kubbel
BCM 1918
WIN



P. Byway
Original 2018
DRAW



P. Byway
Original 2018
DRAW



P. Michelet
Original 2018
DRAW

The answers are given on page 831

New Year Nostalgia and Novelty

How to start a New Year? Begin with the nostalgia, but briefly; then onwards into the new!

So, what was BCM doing one hundred years ago? Publishing Kubbel's study. There were three Kubbels who were study composers, three brothers in fact; the first study in this BCM, first in 2018, is by the best-known, Leonid Kubbel (1892 - 1942). In 1918, the Bolsheviks were in power in Russia, but not yet in control, so it was still safe for Leonid to submit compositions to Western publications; his brother Arvid continued to do so and was executed in 1938 for such fraternising with the bourgeois.

Fortunately, eighty years on, it's safe for anyone, and clearly Paul Byway and Paul Michelet feel comfortable because they've sent some new studies that are our first originals of 2018. In the first of Paul Byway's studies the material balance is a general win for Black, so White has to act quickly. Paul Byway's second study is based on an idea in an 1829 study by K F Schmidt; Paul's setting makes the idea clearer and reduces the piece count from 17 to 8. Paul Michelet describes his study as 'a minor sacrificial orgy'.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE

ISSUE 04

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SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

(See page 827)

The first problems of 2018-19

Last time, we completed the 2016-17 cycle of original BCM problems, and we await the judgment of our judge, Hans Gruber, upon these. Now we start a new two-year cycle, our 2018-19 tourney. We accept all types of orthodox problem – usually (like this time) these comprise direct mates and helpmates, though I'd be only too pleased to publish, say, a selfmate if someone would send me one! This month the emphasis is on helpmates (a genre very different from actual play – in the 2-mover, for instance, we're looking for two collaborative sequences of moves, BWB, to achieve a position in which Black is mated), but we start with another longer direct mate from Paul, showing play that is much more closely related to actual play.

Rounding up the black king

In the 9-mover it's tempting to try to mate the black king in the corner but, quite surprisingly, it turns out that we can more easily round it up when it moves to a central file. It may also come as a surprise that we start by sacrificing an apparently strong unit: 1.c7! forces 1...♗xc7 and now play continues 2.♖b6+ ♗b8 3.♗d7+ ♗c8 4.♗cb6+ ♗d8. Here White plays 5.♗c5!, tying the black rook and black knight to the defence of possible mating squares. Black has nothing for it other than to run his pawn - 5...f2. Now how is White to promote? If 6.h8♖, then ...f1♖+ 7.♗g7+ ♗e8+! successfully defends. So instead 6.h8♗!, and now we have a different cross-checking sequence, redounding this time to White's advantage - 6...f1♖+ 7.♗f7+ ♖xf7+ 8.♗xf7, and Black is in zugzwang; mate follows next move.

A different mindset

Welcome to Rolf Wiehagen upon his first (I think) contribution to this column. Solving the first helpmate you may like to focus on the black knights. In the diagram they are restricting the mobility of White's two major pieces. Upon further examination, it turns out that the power of the black bishops also has to be neutralised. Combining these ideas, we play 1.♗e3 (prospectively intercepting the ♗h6's diagonal) ♖a5 and now the other black knight has to occupy f5, as it is the only way to clear a path for

the white bishop without guarding a square in the mating position: 2.♗gf5 ♗e1#. When we place the black knight instead on b8 for part (b) something very similar happens, though this time it's the other black bishop we need to neutralise and we have to alternate the roles of the white knights - 1.♗e4 ♗f2 2.♗fg3 ♖b5#.

Two longer helpmate-solving exercises

Our two longer helpmates do not offer the same precise move-by-move correspondence between the motivations for the various moves in the two solutions, but hopefully the solutions are complementary enough to assuage aesthetic qualms. In a 3-mover featuring white rook and white bishop, it's a fair bet that in one solution the rook will administer mate supported by the bishop and in the other it will be the bishop supported by the rook. That's how it works out here: 1.♗d4 e4 2.♗g5 ♖c2 3.♗e3 ♖c4# and 1.♗f4! (purely a waiting move) exf3 2.♗f5 f4 3.e4 ♗h3#. In the 4-mover, the black king will be mated on two different squares and the black bishop will provide blocks on two different potential flight squares. The role of the black rook is radically different in the two solutions! They run as follows: 1.♗xg2 ♗c1 2.♗h1 ♗d3 3.♖g1 ♗xf3 4.♗h2 ♗f2# and 1.f2+ ♗d2 2.♖xc3 ♗xc3 3.♗h2 ♗d1 4.♗g1 ♗e3#.

ENDGAME STUDIES

(See page 828)

Kubbel

1. ♖g8+ ♖a7 2. ♜e3 ♜xd3+ 3. ♜c2 ♜xe3 4. ♜xd2 ♜b3 5. ♜a8+ ♜b6 6. ♜b8+ wins. The black rook is cornered in the centre of the board (if that sentence makes sense!) 1. ♜e3? ♜xd3+ 2. ♜c2 d1 ♖+ 3. ♜xd1 ♜xg3. In the main line, 3...e4 4. ♜d1 and 3...♜d4 4. ♜e8 ♜b6 5. ♜f1 ♜c6 6. ♜xe5 ♜d6 7. ♜h5. Also in the main line, 4. ♜a8+? ♜b6 5. ♜xd2 ♜g3.

Byway – six piece study

1. ♜g6 ♜h3+ 2. ♜e1 ♜h6 3. ♜d6+ ♜d7 4. ♜f7 ♜h5 5. ♜f4 and White has successfully arranged to exchange a knight for the bishop and so draws. Alternatives to the main line moves are: 1...♜h1+ 2. ♜g2 ♜h6 3. ♜d6+ ♜d8 4. ♜f7+: 1...♜b5+ leaves the double white threat of ♜xh8 and ♜d6+; 2. ♜e2? ♜h6 3. ♜d6+ ♜d7 4. ♜f7 ♜h5 5. ♜f4 ♜g4+: 2. ♜g1/f2? ♜h6 3. ♜d6+ ♜d7 4. ♜e5+ ♜e6; 3. ♜f6+? ♜f7; 3...♜d8 4. ♜f7+: 4. ♜e5+? ♜e6; 5...♜f5 6. ♜xh3. In the course of the solution, the white position is reflected about the e/f line.

Byway – eight-piece study

1. ♜f8 c1 ♖ 2. ♜h3+ ♜d5 3. ♜d8+ ♜e4 4. ♜g2+ ♜f5 5. ♜f8+ ♜e6 6. ♜h3+ draws by repetition, a roundabout repetition. The sidelines off the main line are: 1. ♜c4+? ♜d6; 1...♜d7 2. ♜h3+ e6 3. ♜xe6+; 2...♜d6 3. ♜d8+ ♜c7 4. ♜c8+; 3. ♜g2+? e4; 4...♜f4 5. ♜f8 mate; and 5. ♜h3+ ♜f6 6. ♜f8+ ♜g7.

Michelet

1. ♜xd5+ ♜xd5 2. ♜xc7+ ♜b6 3. ♜c5 ♜xc5 4. ♜b3+ ♜xb3+ 5. ♜a3 b1 ♖/♗ stalemate. 2...♜xc7 3. ♜b5+ and 4. ♜c3. 3. ♜c5 threatens ♜b5+. 4...♜c4 5. ♜d2+ and draws by ♜b1 and then ♜a3. The finish is known from other studies, but the preamble is a pleasing novelty.



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